



Elsword Time Trouble Volume 8

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Contents

0.	Return and then Awakening	3
1.	Knight and King	13
2.	Emotionless Angel and Insane Devil	62
3.	End of Time and Space	119
4.	Whirlwind of Time and Space	141
5.	Time to Love	168

0. Return and then Awakening

All the fighting ended.

Elesis solemnly stared at the Devil's back. Dark hole created about 3 meters above the Devil was strongly sucking in air inside the throne room.

"So that's....."

Space-Time Gate leading to the universe's core started to open. If D enters it, it won't just end with time twisting and bending cause and effect..... even fundamental laws of the universe could be changed.

Elesis made up her mind and took a step forward. Raven gave her an eye gesture telling her to stop but she didn't oblige.

Now that Aisha has fallen..... there was no more chances left for her, and for the El Search Party.

"Stop, where are you going?"

The Devil seemed defenceless because he was focused on opening the Space-Time Gate. Karis blocked Elesis' path.

Elesis grabbed her sword hilt instead of answering.

"Are you insane.....?"

Karis couldn't finish her words because she was so astounded. Betrayal? Why would she do it now after watching the El Search Party fall?

Despite being confused, Karis was about to attack when an unexpected voice was heard.

"Don't get in her way."

"What?"

Not just anyone, but the Devil who was being targeted ordered Karis to step aside. Karis felt puzzled by this but she couldn't imagine herself ever going against the Devil's order.

As Elesis' footsteps approached, the Devil didn't look back and asked.

With a voice mixed with laughter for some reason.

"I'm impressed you restrained yourself when I killed Elsword, Elesis."

"It's not the first time I saw it happen."

There was a vague trembling in her voice. The Devil noticed this but didn't pry further.

"Yes, so what's the reason for you going against me now? You've seen it happen countless times."

"I can't let you open the Space-Time Gate, D. I won't allow you to change this universe's history however you'd like."

"Why can't I?"

The Devil finally looked around. His dark eyes gave off a chilling aura.

"I invested uncountable amount of time to get to this point."

".....Eve you know won't come back even if you do this. You should know very well."

Murderous intent dwelled on the Devil's face when Elesis' words hit the mark.

But the Devil.... unexpectedly chose to converse instead.

Elesis who endured so much torment during those innumerable occasions she stood on the Devil's side was worthy of his respect.

The Devil turned his head again to look at fallen Eve leaning against a wall..... he witnessed the scene for a moment then turned his gaze away towards the ceiling.

It was as if he couldn't bear to look any longer.

"Do machines have life? Do you think there's an individuality between Nasods? No, do you think such thing exists across all lifeforms?"

The Devil's lonesome voice rang across the throne room.

"If they have the same structure, same voice and same appearance, then is that really a same Nasod? Is that really a same lifeform? In the first place, is me from 5 minutes before really a same person as me right now? Even in this moment, cells are dying and being born. If lifeforms are just collection of cells and are moving from stimulation of electric signals.....then those variables are continuously changing even as I'm speaking right now. To be strict, it's difficult to say me from just a moment before is a same individual as me right now."

"....."

"So in the end, just how am I defined? How are you defined? Can you give me an acceptable answer to this question?"

"I'm not an engineer. I'm only a tainted knight."

The Devil chuckled in a low voice from hearing the answer. Elesis who turned her back on the El Search Party together with him still had a righteous side to her after all this time.

“I already knew what you pointed out long ago. That’s why I’ll create a world I want, one that has Eve that I can accept.”

Elesis slowly swung her sword without answering. The Devil didn’t even bother to look towards her direction.

“No matter how hard you try, you cannot defeat me now that I have control of both time and space. You should have attacked me together with Aisha you were seriously trying to kill me.”

Sword slowly made an arc amidst the silence then touched the Devil’s neck.

“Stop opening the gate right now.”

“.....This isn’t like you. Instead of making trifling threats, striking without taking questions suits you better.”

The Devil whispered as if singing then closed his eyes.

“Stop this, Elesis. I’ll give you an appropriate reward since we’ve been on the same side for so long. Time where you go on an adventure with your brother and the El Search Party to save Elrios. Will you be satisfied with that?”

“I didn’t turn a blind eye on you all this time so I can obtain some garbage like that. I.....”

“Yes, you didn’t want to kill me if possible. You wanted to end this without killing, that’s why you let innumerable amount of time flow by.”

The Devil said this then looked back while grinning. His dimension distortion barrier could be turned off and on with caster’s wish. Blood trickled down the Devil’s neck from a cut made by the sword but he didn’t care.

The Devil who was bleeding from his neck looked at the people that joined his side.

“Raven, should I give you back the time where Seris is alive?”

“.....”

Raven who was carrying unconscious Rena didn’t say anything. He only added strength to his hand holding someone dear to him.

“I can return Sasha for Ran. I don’t know what Helputt wants but I’ll listen to whatever request he makes. Also for Karis.....”

“Yes, Lord D!”

Karis became overjoyed at the arrangement of rewards. The Devil suddenly smiled coldly after seeing Karis wag her tail in anticipation like an excited puppy.

“Should I give Luciela to you?”

“Huh? Who’s that?”

Karis’ reaction was as if she never heard of the name before. The Devil shrugged as if saying ‘forget it’.

The Devil had an absolute confidence. He didn’t even consider Elesis pointing her sword against his neck right now as a threat.

“It’s a name you wouldn’t know now..... and will never know. Yes, I’ll make you empress of the Demons. Is that good enough for you?”

“Yes! I’ll be loyal to you forever, Lord D!”

Karis bowed while becoming very exuberant. The Devil looked at Elesis again after promising everyone to grant whatever they wished in the newly created space-time.

“All their wishes will disappear if you kill me. Wishes they tried to fulfill even by turning back time and changing the universe will be all for naught. Will you strike me down despite knowing this?”

“.....I hoped this moment would never come.”

Elesis sighed then slowly withdrew her sword. She wasn’t ceasing hostility, she was positioning herself to swing her sword properly. The Devil could open the dimension distortion barrier at any moment he wanted, so Elesis had to fight properly in order to break through that barrier.

Elesis gripped her sword tightly with two hands then lowered her stance.

“.....Elesis.”

“Don’t say anything more.”

The Devil right now had dominion over both time and space. Elesis couldn’t win no matter how strong she was.

No, she had no chance of victory even when the Devil proclaiming himself as King of Time.

“But I can still die while fighting. It’s too late.....but I’ll die while trying to stop you just like the others.”

“.....Elsword would have been happy if he heard you now.”

The Devil smiled regrettably then closed his eyes.

Elesis knew all too well that she couldn’t win. She was expressing her will that she had no desire to live in the artificial blissful time that the Devil created.

Just like the Dimension Princess, Aisha did.

“Two of us have come so far.....”

Elesis wouldn't change her mind no matter what he says now. It was time to end their long relationship.

The moment the Devil opened his eyes and Elesis was about to start the fight where her defeat was certain.....

Boom!!

'That' appeared with a heavy thud.

The Devil turned to look at a purple sphere that appeared at the center of the fallen El Search Party. Elesis also looked towards the direction of the sphere. It almost seemed like she could use this chance to take the Devil's life while he was distracted, but he wasn't someone such simple surprise attack would work against.

Also, she had a general idea as to what that sphere was.

“It can't be.....”

The sphere dissolved along with Elesis' gasp, and the passenger revealed himself.

Throne Room.

He returned to the place he was at before he crossed universes.

Dark red stain below his feet... it was Elsword's dried blood. Add looked down at his feet for a moment then slowly looked around the surroundings. Add closed his eyes after witnessing fallen Ara, Chung, Aisha and lastly....Eve.

It was better to close his eyes. Since continuing to look felt like he was going to be turned inside out.

“I thought..... I could arrive at the time I wanted if I crossed universes.”

“That was a wasted hope. You can't time travel anymo-.....”

The Devil who was answering must have noticed because he shut his mouth. Gazes were exchanged without words. Add answered to acknowledge the Devil's question.

“Yes, I'm the only one that returned.”

“.....”

“Eun knew about you. No.....actually, all of you knew each other, am I right?”

Add’s gaze passed by the Devil, Elesis and Raven one by one. Add laughed empty when no one denied his claim.

“I thought for a long time while returning. I was wrong. It wasn’t that the other universe’s El Search Party had banded together..... People that had originally banded together were separated in this universe.”

Before he met Lu and Ciel, Add was overjoyed from seeing the El Search Party with all 9 members together. But that was actually the original El Search Party.

Combining how Elesis and Aisha recognised each other, and other various conversations that went back and forth, it was certain that the 9 member El Search Party also existed in this universe at one time.

“And the one who destroyed that is.....”

Add slowly opened his eyes then looked at the Devil. His future, someone he couldn’t defeat right now.

It was obvious. It was painfully obvious that him in the future who mastered more knowledge and skills was stronger than him from the present.

How can anyone surpass their own future?

“You must have learned some useless information while moving across universes. So? What’s your point?”

The Devil spoke coldly then slowly raised his hand. His hand was directed towards Add’s chest. It was a death sentence.

“I.....”

Add spoke slow and clearly while putting emphasis on each and every word. He needed to suppress this surging rage, urge to scream in madness so he could clearly declare to everyone.

For the sake of that fox he can never see again.

“I’m going to get rid of you, Diablo.”

“There were days when we spoke about things like this, remember the talk about rolling a dice?”

The Devil smiled coldly. This analogy about rolling a dice until you got the result you wanted was used numerous times before.

“The dice I’ve been rolling is you.”

“.....”

“You’re not surprised. You must have understood already.”

Theory that Add made while returning to this universe proved to be correct, but he didn’t answer.

If D had planned all of this, if he had used the demon army to get in the way of the El Search Party..... then there must be a reason for it.

Just why did D target the El Search Party? No, if he wanted to harm them, why did he let it drag on?

The El Search Party would have been annihilated quickly if D appeared in Ruben.

“No, it would have been all over quickly if you sent Ran and Karis at the same time.....”

Ran and Karis faced the El Search Party separately in Hamel. Add’s gaze lingered on Ran and Karis for a moment then returned to the Devil.

“But you never intervened directly until the 2nd Velder Liberation operation. Everything you did was just to toy with us.”

It was vexing but this was the truth. But D wouldn’t have done this without any reason. It must be part of the method to achieve his goal.

The Devil nodded to Add’s question with a bored face.

“That’s right, I stopped this universe’s time, stopped the flow of history, then kept rolling the dice. I kept rolling, rolling and rolling the dice.....waiting for the result I wanted.”

It was just as Add expected. This wasn’t the first time this battle in the throne room happened.

There must have been numerous standoffs like this during more than 20 million fights Add repeated.

“Normally at this point, Eun would send you back to the past, to the starting point. And since Aisha wasn’t present..... I’d just turn a blind eye.”

“.....”

It meant that all their fights until now have been merely dancing on top of the Devil’s palm.

The Devil gripped his fist lightly as if to show off. Even with that light movement, space nearby crumbled then twirled back into its original state.

The Devil didn’t look excited at all despite obtaining truly overwhelming power.

“But boring dice rolls are finally over. I conquered space..... and that damned fox died in middle of nowhere.”

Remorse flashed by the Devil’s face.

“How foolish of her till the end.....”

“Shut your mouth.”

The Devil stopped speaking from hearing Add’s clear reply. Add slowly and calmly glared at his future.

“That damned fox’s efforts weren’t wasted. She gave her life, she gave everything she had and fought together with me. Her efforts in both times I remember and don’t remember..... they were all so she could make me destroy you.”

The Devil made an astonished face for a moment then burst out laughing.

“Kahahaha! That’s funny! That’s so funny! Are you saying you are going to defeat me? Me, who obtained time and space, and became King of Space-Time? Nonsense!!”

“You’ll see if I’m speaking nonsense or not. Also.....”

Add clenched his fists tightly.

“Don’t you dare call her a damned fox.”

“.....”

There were many uncertain intertwining feelings regarding saying this but there was only one answer.

“.....I’m the only one who gets to call her that.”

“How boring.....”

The Devil became disinterested then snapped his finger lightly. Then space shattered consecutively six times to tear apart Add’s body-.....

Clank!!

But it couldn’t. Add opened miniature dimension distortion barriers at each points of the Devil’s attacks the moment they activated.

“What.....”

The Devil frowned after witnessing the unexpected result. He realized the change that occurred to Add.

“You can’t possible have.....”

“It’s the power that damned fox left me.”

Add’s eyes momentarily got dyed red then returned to normal.

Clairvoyance, Add could read how the Devil will attack and prepare accordingly thanks to this power of seeing into the future.

Even if Add’s powers lacked, he could respond readily long as he could read couple moves ahead.

This was an unimaginable situation but the surprised look on the Devil’s face disappeared quickly.

“And? So what?”

The Devil launched 2 Space Distortions and 3 Void Impacts this time. Add intercepted them by opening dimension distortion barriers again but the Devil didn’t stop there and also launched Void Field and Void Breaker.

“Kugh.....!”

Sweat dripped down along Add’s face after managing to successfully counter all of them. In contrast, the Devil didn’t have even a single drop of sweat on his face.

“Is that all you got after declaring so confidently that you’ll defeat me? This isn’t even a warm-up-.....”

Sword strike aiming for the jeering Devil flew in. Elesis had lunged aiming for the Devil’s neck. 2 layers out of 10 dimension distortion barriers casted around the Devil instantly got destroyed.

The Devil managed to buy some time thanks to the barriers as he immediately backed out and attacked at the same time.

“Reverse Circle!!”

Elesis quickly performed a backflip to dodge the Devil’s attack then landed beside Add. Add had seen with clairvoyance that Elesis would attack the Devil, but he didn’t know the reason.

“Why?”

“I changed my mind.”

Elesis spoke coldly while looking ahead.

“You’re the only one who can defeat D. I didn’t want to believe that..... But I’ll believe it unconditionally now since Eun even gave up her life. I’ll become your sword and shield. So.....”

“Alright.”

He'll defeat the Devil for sure. At Add's answer, Elesis didn't even nod as she dashed towards the Devil without any hesitation. Add also mobilized his Dynamos and followed closely behind Elesis so he wouldn't get left behind.

It was start of the Time War's final battle.

1. Knight and King

Karis' eyes gleamed after seeing that Elesis and Add joined hands. She flew up immediately. This was the perfect chance to execute that eyesore Elesis.....

“Don’t interfere.”

Something strange happened soon as the Devil spoke this line. Karis was certainly flapping her wings and moving forward, but the distance between her and the Devil and Elesis didn’t close at all.

Distance between the Devil and Karis was becoming further instead.

Physical distance literally increased..... and now, distance that had been merely 5 meters away stretched to become 100 meters.

This was the power of the Devil that controlled space!

But the power to stretch space was only used to prevent Karis and other allies from interfering. Elesis had instantly closed the distance and was swinging her sword.

Dark-red blade struck the neck-zone, instantly spun around, then struck the waist. Normal being would have been dismembered from their neck and waist then died instantly. But the Devil was being protected from the dimension distortion barrier.

“Void.....”

“Void Field.....!”

The moment when the Devil was about to activate Void Field to restrain Elesis, Add opened it first instead. Add fell far behind in space controlling abilities but the story changed now that there’s Elesis running around in the front line.

Add wasn’t a close quarters combatant in the first place. He was more suited for supporting allies from mid-range, he can display his full potential when there’s a tanker who can keep the enemy occupied.

Slash!

Elesis read Add’s intention and kept up the pressure on the Devil. The Devil quickly shattered Add’s Void Field then attempted to attack Elesis by backing out with Reverse Circle.....

“Void Impact!”

But Add read ahead into where the Devil will reappear with clairvoyance then attacked that location. He didn’t have enough firepower to break through the Devil’s dimension distortion barrier but he could at least stall him for a moment.

And in a battle like this... that moment determines life or death.

“Hah!”

Elesis slid in then strongly slashed upwards. Her attack was heavy and precise. Distortion barrier did its work so her attack didn't reach its target..... but the Devil's feet got lifted slightly.

“?”

Surprise rose in the Devil's face for the first time.

No matter how strong Elesis was, she couldn't defeat him who conquered space and time. That's why he had been treating her half-heartedly..... but the strength behind her sword transferred over the distortion barrier and lifted his feet?

Seeing that Devil was taken aback, Add quickly calculated another Void Impact formula. The Devil felt his body shake from the layers of distortion barriers breaking.

“.....How annoying!”

But the Devil's surprise lasted only for a moment. Coldness dwelled on his face.

Combination of Add with clairvoyance and Elesis was impressive but it was only a petty trick in the end. They didn't manage to inflict even slightest damage on him.

And it will continue to be so.

“Void Impact!! Quadruple!!”

The Devil ignored Elesis whether she was swinging her sword or not then fired four Void Impacts towards Add at his back. Add read them coming already. But.....

He had to give everything he had to block them! Add was quickly about to respond then froze from the vision that emerged in his head.

“Elesis, dodge!!”

Elesis who was about to launch more ferocious attacks using the moment when the Devil was occupied heard Add's warning then quickly backed out from Add's warning.

But their enemy was a Devil who even obtained power to rule over space.

Elesis quickly dashed backwards..... she could gain 10m of distance in a single breath under normal circumstances, but she couldn't escape even 1cm right now.

Her legs were moving backwards but the distance between her and the Devil didn't become further at all. It was becoming shorter instead.

Elesis realized the situation and stopped moving her feet.

“.....”

The Devil stopped in front of Elesis then wordlessly stretched out his hand. The hand in front of her, everything ends if that hand closes into a fist.

Elesis knew this but didn't say anything.

Even now, Elesis knew she could live if she changed her mind and decided to follow the Devil's will. But she merely just stared at the Devil.

The Devil spoke instead.

“.....Rest now, my knight.”

Boom! Sound of space tearing was heard then Elesis' body shook violently. Her body seemed to collapse suddenly then she knelt down.

It would have been normal for Elesis to collapse on the ground entirely..... but she maintained a kneeling stance by stabbing her sword on the ground.

“.....”

Elesis' bloodstained back came into Add's view after finally managing to nullify the Devil's Void Impacts. The result wasn't different at all from the future he saw with clairvoyance.

Elesis died soon as the Devil became serious.

“Did you just.....”

Add knew what he was saying was absurd. But he couldn't help but to say it.

“Did you..... just kill her?”

“.....Yes.”

The Devil narrowed his eyes as he spoke. Add knew his words right now weren't rational at all, but he couldn't help but to say it.

“E-Elesis was your subordinate. No, she was on your side. But you killed her? Just because she helped me?”

“It's normal to kill traitors.”

“.....I don't want to hear something so obvious!”

Add threw up the shout that was boiling from within him. His head wanted to deny that this guy was his future..... but he had been admitting it in his heart so far.

But in this moment, he wanted to deny it even in his heart.

“Y-you didn’t have to kill her! Why did you kill her?!”

“.....”

“Don’t give me stupid excuses like you executed her because she betrayed you!!”

Even if Elesis and Add fought together, their chances of defeating the Devil wasn’t even 10%. No, this was already being too generous... would their actual chances be around 3%?

Two of them did launch a ferocious offensive but couldn’t even manage to draw a single drop of blood from the Devil.

They weren’t any threat to the Devil after all. So... why did he kill Elesis as if it was nothing!?

“You could have not killed her. You didn’t have to. No, not just Elesis. Not just Elesis, but.....”

Add pressed down on his chest that felt like it was about to explode. This wasn’t because fear of being killed now that he was left all by himself.

Rage..... and sorrow came first.

He couldn’t change Elesis’ death even though he saw the future.

He couldn’t change Eun’s death despite crossing universes.

He jumped across time but couldn’t change deaths of people dear to him.

Even though he struggled so much to obtain power..... he couldn’t stop the El Search Party from being wiped out.

“W-why are you killing everyone!? You shouldn’t have to!!”

“.....”

Yes, Add could cope with the fact that the Devil was playing dice rolls with him. No. He wasn’t accepting it, but he could at least comprehend it.

He could comprehend that something like this might be possible if their positions had switched.

But this was different. The Devil killed... Elsword, Ara, Chung, Rena, Aisha, Elesis.

And Eve...

“Just, why.....”

The Devil possessed truly overwhelming power. He could have easily incapacitated without killing. So why would he go as far as to kill?

The Devil who was quietly listening to Add's cry of despair asked calmly.

“Why should I keep them alive?”

“.....”

“Eradicate any obstacles disregarding ways or means. This should be same for you as well.”

Yes, that should have been..... Add's way of doing things. Add had never truly belonged to the El Search Party.

Everything was so he could look for the chance to steal Eve's core.

“Dice rolls are now..... over.”

The Devil slowly raised his hand. Attack that ended Elesis' life was about to fly towards him next. Add looked ahead with clairvoyance then quickly opened up a dimension distortion barrier. But the Devil ignored Add's act of defense and snapped his finger consecutively two times.

Crash!!

Add's body shook violently with the sound of glass breaking. The attack now looked like a single space distortion that could have been blocked easily. But that wasn't the case.

Add pressed down on his torn waist as he slowly stepped back. Blood was dripping even from his arm.

“Hundred.”

The Devil was looking up at the ceiling with a bored expression. It was as if ignoring Add's existence, as if Add wasn't worthy of his attention.

The Devil had just fired 100 compressed space distortions in an instant. The fight so far had been space distorting powers colliding and nullifying each other. But the Devil's attack just now was in a totally different league in terms of ability to control space.

It was at a level that Add didn't think was theoretically possible. Even if Add realized the scope of the Devil's ability now, he lacked the strength to respond appropriately.

Even if Add could read the future, it was no use if he didn't have enough strength to defend against the incoming demise.

"I had to dispose of Elesis because you were running about."

"....."

He'll lose like this. Add pressed on his bleeding wound as he ran his brain desperately to seek for a solution.

Should he run away using time travel? Against King of Time?

"Kill yourself. That should be the easiest way for both of us."

The Devil's declaration saying he wouldn't go out of his way to step on an ant crawling on the ground. Add had no choice but to agree. The Devil's ability was truly terrifying.....and Add had no chance to win with his current strength.

"....."

Add panted as he activated clairvoyance then searched for a future where he could turn this dire situation around. But there was absolutely no chance that he could win in this situation. The Devil was merely not stomping down on him for now.

The Devil will resume attacking if this allowed time was over. He won't be able to block it this time. Even if he somehow managed to block the next attack, he won't survive the attack after that.

"Lose....."

He didn't want to say it, but defeat was right in front of his eyes. He thought he could definitely find a way to win if he crossed time and universes.

Even though everyone believed in him.

Even though Eun gave up her life.....Even though Elsword, Elesis, Ara, Chung.....

And Eve believed in him and fought by putting everything on the line.

He'll lose to the Devil here and die in the end.

The El Search Party will lose in the end.

"Ah....."

His face felt hot. Add realized he was crying. Tear drop from his left eye trickled down his face then followed along his chin as it dropped to the ground.

The Devil frowned after seeing Add shed tears. It looked as if he witnessed something really unpleasant.

“It’s me but this is unsightly.....”

“No.....”

Add didn’t wipe his tear or blood as he slowly straightened his back. His brain hurt from performing overburdening calculations, his body didn’t move properly due to excessive blood loss, but he couldn’t stay crouched down.

“You’re the one who’s unsightly, Devil.”

“.....”

“I thought you were my future self. But I get it now. You’re not me. I won’t become you.”

Add’s voice was low and calm despite tears trickling down his face. It was voice of a man that clearly knew what he had to do.

“You’re not me. No matter what happened, no matter how obsessed you were with Eve..... I can’t admit you and I are same individuals.”

“Is that your final words? Confession that you won’t become someone like me?”

The Devil had an annoyed sneer on his face. If Add was despairing from looking at his future, the Devil was looking at his past deplorably.

“No, this is a declaration..... for what I’m about to do.”

Add slowly reached inside his pocket. The Devil looked on as if to let Add try whatever he wanted.

But confidence disappeared from the Devil’s face when he saw what was in Add’s hand.

“You.....”

The thing in Add’s hand was Memory of Time and Space. Add scoffed from noticing the Devil’s face becoming serious.

“I see, so you’re wary of this too. Are you scared that I might activate this?”

“.....”

“There was something I forgot. It didn’t happen for Eve, but Ara and Elsword’s physical appearance changed when they awakened their Memory of Time and Space. To put it precisely, they aged. It won’t be wrong to say they grew.”

The Devil remained wordless to confirm Add’s hypothesis. Add grinned.

“Thus, I’ll grow too if I awaken this. I’ll become my future self, so would I become like you?”

“.....If you can awaken it.”

The Devil gave a short response. Add shook his head from how the Devil was being extremely cautious.

“Yes, but as you know already, I couldn’t awaken this thing. I never figured out the method even while Ara, Elsword and Eve were all successful. And I still don’t know how.”

“.....”

“But..... I know how to forcefully make its power explode.”

Add smiled violently then threw the Memory of Time and Space into his mouth. The Devil stretched his hand to attack, but the Memory of Time and Space had already gone down Add’s throat.

Space shattering shockwaves rushed towards Add who just swallowed the Memory of Time and Space.

“.....This is something I learned in the other universe!”

Energy dwelled in Add’s fingertips. Add immediately stretched his hand forward and opened a dimension distortion barrier that surrounded wide area around his body.

Dimension distortion barrier worked by restructuring the surrounding space according to Add’s will. It was reinterpreting laws of physics to achieve the result of ignoring physical shock. It usually didn’t get much larger than 3 meters in radius..... but the one he opened right now was 10 meters in radius.

All the space distortions the Devil fired were blocked by Add’s distortion barrier. This attack would have normally pierced right through, but Add’s barrier’s density and additive calculations was at a different level this time.

It was different than before. It was impenetrable at least in this moment!

But the Devil didn’t look particularly fazed by his attacks being nullified or how Add’s skill level increased to an entirely new stage.

“Is that it?”

Only his voice became slightly more serious.

Add smiled while panting from the pain as if his body was on fire.

“No, I can’t beat you with just this.....”

“I couldn’t even scathe your hair despite that strongest Elesis helping me.....”

Add bit his lips in frustration while looking at lifeless Elesis who knelt leaning on her sword.

Elesis did her part perfectly. It was Add who was lacking.

“Even that muscle head grew.....”

Elsword magnificently awakened his Memory of Time and Space and decided to buy Add time to escape despite learning the entire truth.

This situation itself was allowed because there was Elsword.

“And that klutz too.....”

They could defeat Ran and come this far because there was Ara. Add could confront the Devil because there was Chung who lay fallen right now and Rena who was unconscious in Raven’s arms.

And because there was Eve..... he still wasn’t giving up now.

“I... I’m..... lacking by myself.”

“.....”

“I can’t win by myself. That’s the kind of ability I have!”

Add was strong but he wasn’t all-powerful. He fell behind in physical strength compared to others in the group and had zero close quarter combat abilities.

“I kept holding back saying we can win next time. But there is no more next time..... I won’t run away anymore. I’ll defeat you right here, Devil!”

“How can you be so confident knowing that you’re weaker? Did you see some kind of future?”

The Devil smiled as if he was amused. Add didn’t back down and smiled back.

“I can’t see that kind of future. But one thing I’m sure of is that.....”

Add can display his full potential when he’s with others, when there are others supporting him.

Add conveyed his heart with a burning voice.

“Sorry, I’m sorry everyone..... But one more time, let me ask all of you for help just one more time. Our fight isn’t over yet. This moment right now..... this is the time when we have to win.”

The Devil frowned from hearing Add’s words. Enough conversations, the Devil was about to finish Add once and for all but then his eyes widened in surprise from Add’s next words.

“It’s not the time to end it just yet. That’s why, starting now..... I’m turning it all back, you idiots!!”

Add shouted loudly as he activated the calculations he formulated through the Dynamos.

In that moment, white seal emitted from Add’s body as it spread out across the entire throne room. A formless energy wave encompassing everything followed.

Then..... all time started rewinding.

“What.....?!”

The Devil gasped in shock at the scene in front of his eyes.

Blood flowing out of Add’s side slowly flowed back into his body then the wound closed. Pieces of Add’s broken Dynamos from before floated up then slowly reassembled themselves. Ground that was shattered from the fierce battle became cleanly restored.

It was literally a miracle. But the condition of Add who was performing that miracle wasn’t good at all.

“Kuuugh!”

There was a pain as if his fingers were being torn off. It was much worse than performing double or triple.

Add was someone who tried to obtain his goal by moving through time. But abilities he displayed until now were abnormalities like double and triple that made use of space and time to assist in battles, and even that left massive feedback on his body.

He had never attempted to entirely rewind time of the present.

But he can do it. He should be able to. There was no way that a boy who can jump through time as he wished..... couldn’t control time of the present as he wished!!

Crack.

Add’s eyepatch broke from the shockwave created as time was distorted. White part of Add’s left eye that was revealed started to become dyed in black.

The Devil gasped as he saw Add's eyes becoming just like his.

"You're insane! What you're trying to do is going against will of the universe! You'll never succeed....."

What Add was doing right now was completely insane. Swallowing Memory of Time and Space to make his powers explode? That was same as putting poison in one's body but that could be understood as a last ditch effort.

But trying to turn back time of the present instead of time traveling?

"You going back and forth in time and turning back time of the present are entirely different issues!! Your existence itself will be obliterated if you fail!!"

"I..... don't care."

".....What?"

The Devil had a face as if he seriously couldn't comprehend. Add, with even his tears dried now, shouted with a sensation as if he was throwing up blood. All his senses were becoming numb from the pain akin to his body getting shattered but he didn't care.

He wanted to turn it back.

His mistakes. Get back the lost time.

Add's one sole wish that he yearned to fulfill.

"I'm....."

He wanted to fulfill this wish. For that sake, he didn't care if his body and soul broke down.

"I'm going to fight together with these idiots!"

From Add's shout, the Devil frowned then quickly stretched out his hand. Add's abilities improved drastically but he still wasn't a match for him who was king of space-time.

He just had to stomp Add down with force and stop this insane farce.....

"Haaaah!!"

Then there was a shout that slashed through everything, along with a sword smashing down. The Devil saw the sword flying in towards his head and dodged backwards quickly.

Crash!!

Large sword smashed down from middle of a high leap and shattered the ground. It was a good ambush but went to waste. Attacker would normally want to chase after the Devil and pressure him further.

But the red-haired boy maturely withdrew his sword slowly.

“Don’t you dare touch Big Brother Add.”

Fallen Elsword rose back up as time rewound. Add grinned as he looked at Elsword’s back with blurry vision.

That boy was detestable, but he trusted him right now.

“Big Brother.”

Elsword spoke while looking ahead and being guarded against the Devil. It was quite mature and very reliable voice.

“Keep going. I’ll hold on for you.”

Turning back time of the present wasn’t something that was done instantly. Only person that stood back up right now amongst the El Search Party was Elsword.

“.....Don’t die, you idiot.”

“Yeah.”

Elsword fixed the grip on his sword then glared at the Devil. The Devil made a bitter face after witnessing revival of Elsword who was particularly annoying and persistent in the previous battle.

“I’m insane too but this is seriously insane..... Just what’s going to change from doing this? Didn’t all of you lose to me once already? Do you want to taste pain of death once more?”

While in disbelief, the Devil fired a Void Impact towards Elsword’s head.

Even if Add turns back the present’s time to revive the El Search Party, all the Devil had to do was repeat what he did before.....

“Hah!!”

But Elsword seemed to hold his sword in short reach then swung it while spinning around. The space that was about to crumble got torn apart from Elsword’s sword slash and returned to normal.

It was a method to nullify space related attacks that strong individuals like Elesis and demon generals performed.

“.....”

But to think Elsword would reach this level of mastery? Skill of Elsword who revived was beyond expectations.

The Devil was frowning when Elsword spoke confidently.

“It will be different this time.”

“.....Just what makes you so sure, you fool?”

“Big Brother Add is with us now.”

Elsword collected his breath then put strength in his legs. Add was turning back time to resurrect his fallen comrades while enduring the pain of his body being torn apart. This was certain from the phenomenon of everything including the broken walls and floors rewinding back to how they were originally before the battle.

“I asked Big Brother to make us win for sure next time. I trust Big Brother Add.”

“.....”

“I’ll believe Big Brother who said we’ll defeat you, that we’ll win this time! Armageddon Blade!!”

Elsword gripped the now gigantic sword then confidently charged forwards. His gaze momentarily lingered on Elesis who fell leaning on her sword but that was only for a very slight instant.

This was an enemy that even his sister couldn’t defeat. Elsword knew down to his bones how powerful the Devil was, how difficult it would be to face him alone.

But Add will raise everyone back up again. He will certainly find a way for them to win.

Elsword believed in his comrade behind him as he charged towards the enemy he could never defeat by himself.

The Devil was feeling quite unpleasant. He could accept personally disposing of Elesis. The time he spent together with her was so long that it was pointless to count. Level of understanding between the two of them was too complex to be described with words. That’s also why he could understand why she turned against him and accept dealing with her personally.

“But you’re..... unpleasant.”

The Devil completely ignored Elsword then looked back. 100 meters behind him were Karis, Ran, Helputt and Raven carrying Rena in his arms.

These were people that had no choice but to obey his words.

“Haaah!!”

Elsword swung his sword towards the Devil who seemed to be completely wide open but the attack couldn't pierce the dimension distortion barrier.

Previously 10-layer barrier, now 6 layers after fighting Elesis and Add, nullified all physical and magical attacks. Even Elesis could only manage to transfer some shock across. The Devil didn't have any scratches on him yet.

The Devil ignored Elsword whether he swung his sword or not and asked.

“Raven, will you fight?”

“.....”

Raven who was carrying unconscious Rena in his arms only stared back quietly with sullen eyes. Raven was worthy of respect in a difference sense than Elesis.

The Devil redirected his gaze then waved his hand lightly.

Then Ran appeared right beside the Devil. Forced teleportation. Ran was quite surprised by this phenomenon which wasn't a teleport but an act of changing the space coordinate itself, but he still managed to swing his sword.

Clank!

Elsword's sword trying to break the Devil's barrier was blocked by Ran's blade. Elsword shouted in surprise.

“Why are you siding with him? Aren't you Big Sister Ara's older brother?!”

“.....”

Ran began to wordlessly wave his sword to drive Elsword back. But Elsword's skills after his growth was formidable as well so he didn't get driven back greatly and started to fight back.

The Devil was now free after having Ran confront Elsword so he turned his eyes towards Add again. Add was giving every ounce of power he had to completely turn back time of the throne room.

If Add was going to do something reckless like turning back the present's time, then it would have been more optimal to narrow the task down to turning back only the El Search Party's time.....

“He's anticipating my intervention.”

To make a comparison..... if two opposing armies meet in an open field and if one side uses a wide formation, then the other side cannot completely ignore this. To prevent Add from turning back time of the throne room, the Devil needed try to keep time of the throne room fixed.

But as the Devil mentioned already, directly interfering with the present's time was incredibly dangerous. Even the Devil who possessed the right to call himself the King of Time and Space didn't try to change time directly and chose to open the Space-time Gate instead.

Feedback and risk was too large.

“.....I shouldn't have to play along with his game.”

Add was risking everything in a gamble, but the Devil with absolute power didn't need to play along with this farce. Destinies and times will be broken and made anew. All he had to do was quicken the process of rewriting time.

Add was displaying power beyond his normal limits as he attempted to rewind time after swallowing the Memory of Time and Space. Elsword believed Add and was fighting with everything he had despite knowing how much odds were against him.

The Devil ignored these two fools then closed his eyes to concentrate. Then dark hole floating above the throne room gradually started to get wider.

The moment of achieving his goal was so close. He had no reason to play with ants moving below him.

“Black..... Destiny!!”

Purple shockwaves swept over Elsword when Ran waved his blade.

Elsword quickly jumped sideways to dodge but blood was seeping out from a slight cut on his face. His breath became heavier as well.

“Haah, haah. Why.....? Why are you getting in my way, Ran!”

“.....”

It was such a foolish question. Ran destroyed Hamel and fought against the El Search Party as their enemy before. But Elsword couldn't help but to ask.

“You saw him killing Big Sister Ara too!! So why are you stopping me?”

“.....”

Ran was silent for a moment when Ara was mentioned, then he let out a light sigh.

“It's something that's been repeated countless times already. There's no point in putting any significance into such things now.”

“Yes, I know! I know that something like this happened many times already! And I also know how Big Brother Add kept trying to avoid this horrible ending by jumping through time!!”

Elsword threw his body forward as he smashed down with his sword in a wide arc. Ran managed to block the attack but couldn't help his feet getting pushed back slightly. Although Elsword's skills were unrefined, his strength was extraordinary.

Battle of strength by locking swords. Elsword shouted angrily as he pressured Ran.

“What if this happened many times? That's why we're giving everything we got to shatter that fake time! You should be helping us instead! Why are you getting in the way?!”

“.....”

Ran frowned then shook his head.

“Things you know right now are only vague knowledge. I've seen this conversation, this situation over dozens, hundreds of times already. And the result was always the same. Don't expect any change from me now.”

“.....”

“Remember this. I'm not Aren Haan. I'm just a demon Ran who's getting in your way.”

Ran said this then summoned his shadow clones. Elsword quickly pulled his body out. 1 versus 1 was difficult already so fighting Ran's clones at the same time would be even more difficult.

“.....”

After pushing Elsword back, Ran turned to look at the Devil bitterly. The Devil was concentrating on opening the Space-time Gate with his eyes closed.

One could supposedly rewrite the time of everything after going through the Space-time Gate and reaching the center of the universe.

The reality Ran desired will appear once the Devil opened the Space-time Gate. The Devil promised him and he wasn't someone who would break a promise for no reason.

“Give up. You guys cannot win no matter how much you struggle.”

“I can't afford to lose.....not this time.”

Elsword ignored Ran's suggestion and focused. Seeing how Elsword was aiming for a quick finish, Ran sighed then gathered this strength. He didn't want to stain his sword with blood at this point but it couldn't be helped again.

“Haaaaah!!”

Elsword's body turned widely as he flew in towards Ran while spinning in a huge horizontal circle. It looked like a foolish attack at first glance but this was to keep both Ran and his clones inside his attack range. This was an inevitable choice since unlike Ran who just had to stall for time, Elsword had to break through.

"How foolish....."

But instead of dodging, Ran summoned three more shadow clones. The clones started to get cut down by Elsword's great sword one by one but the final clone managed to block the attack. Just when Elsword's face got filled with dismay because he never imagined clones to be used as expendables... Ran cleanly slashed his blade downwards.

"It's over."

Elsword was about to fall again. But he couldn't let Add's hard effort of rewinding time to give him another chance to fight go to waste! Elsword was pulling back his body in an attempt to at least avoid critical injury..... when something unexpected happened.

Clank!!

Orange spear deflected away Ran's blade. Owner of the spear didn't just save Elsword, she stabbed consecutively to force Ran to fall back.

Elsword saw who rescued him and shouted gladly.

"Big Sister Ara!"

"Are you alright, Mr.Elsword?"

2nd person to get back up from Add rewinding time was Ara. Ara fixed her gaze on Ran then spoke calmly.

"I'm sorry Mr.Elsword, but please take on the Devil. We'll lose if the Devil opens the Space-time Gate."

"How about you? Will you be okay.....?"

Wouldn't facing Ran be too much of a task for Ara who just got back up? But Ara replied resolutely.

"Stopping Elder Brother is something I have to do. So I'll be counting on you Mr.Elsword!"

"Alright!"

Believing in Ara's feelings, Elsword turned and dashed towards the Devil without hesitation.

When Ran tried to chase after Elsword, Ara quickly followed Ran and blocked his path.

".....It would have been better for you to stay down quietly."

“I have to stop you if you stray from the righteous path, Elder Brother. I can’t turn a blind eye to this.”

Despite just having risen back up, Ara’s voice was calm and mannerly. But Ran’s next words stuck the emptiness in Ara’s heart.

“Do you think you’re a match for me..... even though that fox isn’t here now?”

Woe momentarily dwelled on Ara’s face. Ara knew that Eun who escaped along with Add didn’t come back and that she wouldn’t come back.

“Even if Lord Eun is gone.....”

But Ara gripped her spear tightly.

“The justice I must exact doesn’t change. Prepare yourself, Elder Brother!!”

“.....So there’s this kind of result too.”

Ran didn’t hide the mysterious gladness in his voice as he waved his blade against Ara.

Everything was over if the Devil opened the Space-Time Gate. Elsword gritted his teeth as he ran towards the Devil.

He could only inflict damage after breaking layers of dimension distortion barriers around the Devil..... But the Devil wouldn’t stand by idly as Elsword did this.

The enemy who possessed overwhelming offense and defense. They honestly had no chance.

‘But..... I can’t give up!!’

Add was burning his soul away to resurrect the El Search Party. Elsword clearly knew what he had to do.

He had to disrupt the Devil from opening the Space-time Gate until everyone in the El Search Party got back up!

Whether Add resurrecting the El Search Party was first or the Devil opening the Space-time Gate was first.

This showdown will not only be between Add and the Devil. It will involve all members from both sides.

Elsword sensed this beforehand so he wasn't surprised when a man in giant armor suddenly blocked his path.

He was Helputt, the man who used to be called the Guardian of Hamel.

“Get out of my way, old man!!”

“Uwwooooooh!!”

Helputt who appeared by moving through space at the Devil's call stretched his arms widely and shouted loudly. It was a dignified but menacing shout that shook people down to their very souls.

Even ever so brave Elsword momentarily lost strength in his legs and staggered. Helputt didn't miss this chance and stomped down on Elsword with his cannon. Elsword barely managed to lift his sword to block but couldn't help getting thrown back.

“Kugh!!”

After blocking Elsword's path, Helputt didn't pressure with additional attacks and just stood still like a giant mountain. He didn't have to defeat Elsword, it would be all over if the Devil opened the Space-Time Gate.

Their side could accomplish their goals by just stalling time for the Devil.

Ran and Ara's shouts were coming from behind Elsword. Helputt was blocking the path in front and not pressuring. Elsword noticed Helputt's intention of only defending and stalling for time but he couldn't afford to back down.

“I won't go easy..... even if you're Chung's father!!”

Determined, Elsword was about dash in and try to finish the fight quickly but someone grabbed his shoulder. Elsword looked back in surprise to see Chung who has risen again making a serious expression.

Elsword tried to greet him in joy but Chung was only staring at Helputt.

“Go, Elsword. I'll handle my father.”

“.....Okay!!”

At Chung's words, Elsword ran without looking back. Helputt tried to attack Elsword who was slipping by his side, but Chung jumped even faster and smashed his Destroyer downwards.

Helputt's body shook from the monstrous strength that came from Chung's small body.

“Hmm.....!”

Even while being impressed, Helputt waved his cannon to bounce Chung back. But Chung anticipated Helputt's response and spun around in midair once then landed safely on the ground.

Helputt stared at Chung proudly then shook his head.

"Son, there's something I haven't told you....."

"I know, father. I managed to see one side of time when I got back up from Mr.Add's power. I understand now that this isn't the first time this situation occurred. I understand now why you turned your back on Hamel and sided with the demons."

Chung made a grave face as he answered.

This endless maze of time, to break through this endlessly repeating time..... Helputt decided to obey D so these repeating times could end with minimum casualties as possible.

"Father, you didn't wish for me to join the El Search Party."

"....."

The El Search Party were people that opposed demons and D, they were people destined to fail and fall innumerable. The biggest reason Helputt joined D was because he wanted to prevent his son, Chung from getting caught up in this horrible destiny. And Chung did actually suffer rather fewer casualties during this Time War that occurred over 20 million times.

It was all because Helputt had endured through the disgrace and humiliation of becoming subordinate of the Devil.

"Thank you, father."

"....."

Chung bowed after understanding everything. But his hand didn't let go of his Destroyer.

He gripped it even tighter and looked straightly at his father.

"Father, I finally understand your feelings of trying to spare me from painful times. But I have comrades that I've been fighting together with until now. No matter what kind of result this fight comes to..... My fate is together with the El Search Party."

Chung shook his head. Such polite words, it wasn't fitting for this situation where two opposing parties were facing off against each other.

It wasn't a conversation that father and son about to clash with every ounce of their abilities should be having.

“No, I’ll surpass you father. Then I’ll combine my strength with that of my comrades to defeat the Devil and end this ever so long Time War.”

“Do you honestly believe..... that’s possible?”

There was a very strong regret mixed in Helputt’s voice. Of course, Helputt initially had thoughts and desires about defeating the Devil as well. But he witnessed down to his bones that it was impossible. That’s why he became the Devil’s subordinate to at least assure Chung’s safety.

“It would be impossible by myself. But I believe in my comrades.”

“I can’t believe them.”

“Then allow me to show you starting now!!”

Chung’s armor started to get enlarged then surrounded his entire body. Secret skill of the Seiker Family, the Berserk mode. The son who brought out his abilities to his utmost limits charged towards his powerful father without hesitation.

After leaving Ran to Ara and Helputt to Chung, Elsword quickly dashed forwards.

Less than 20 meters remained between him and the Devil who was concentrating to open the Space-time Gate. There was no one standing in his way now.....

“Know your place, heckler.....”

Seductive woman with red hair blocked Elsword’s path. Karis flapped her bat wings to land softly on the ground then grabbed her scythe while making a sinister smile.

“Get out of my way!”

Elsword didn’t slow down and waved his sword immediately. Karis who had obviously thought the fight would commence after they exchanged some words got startled and fumbled around.

To think he’d charge at her so stupidly!! Karis urgently moved her wings to back out far away.

“You stupid brat.... Kyaah!!”

Karis screamed while swinging her scythe to block when Elsword pursued her after she dodged with low flight. But Karis received the sword in a bad angle so her body got thrown back far.

After throwing Karis away, Elsword turned around to attack the Devil. Karis’ eyes became enflamed with rage after getting completely ignored.

“How dare you! Death Strike!!”

Purple orbs concentrated on small area around Elsword fell from the sky. Elsword stopped his charge towards the Devil then dodged the orbs by strafing, rolling and cutting away the orbs if necessary.

He managed to evade the Death Strike but couldn't afford to carelessly charge at the Devil anymore.

After stopping Elsword in his tracks, Karis sighed while tapping away the dust on her clothes.

"Ah, seriously. I wanted to kill Elesis personally no matter what. But I'm stuck facing her brother instead. How unclassy..... But I have to stay loyal to Lord D."

"....."

"I'll send you off to your sister now. I hope you siblings have a good reunion in the netherworld!"

There were no particular changes to Elsword's expression even though Elesis was mentioned.

His calm demeanor was unsettling. Karis had anticipated Elsword to charge at her like an angry boar so she opened her eyes widely in surprise when he stayed calm.

"What? Why do you look so confident?"

"I'm not the one who you'll be facing."

"What are you saying? Your high and mighty sister is already dead. Would you wake up from your stupid dream if I chop off her head or something?"

Karis let out a hateful giggle then gripped her scythe.

Add turning back time and resurrecting the El Search Party was surprising but it wasn't something to be worried about. They were all weaklings D could take care of by himself, and even Karis could easily take care of likes of Elsword.

Well, it would get annoying if Ara or Chung joined in but they both had their respective foes. Rena was still unconscious and Add couldn't move because he was turning back time.

"Did you go insane after seeing your sister die? I'll put you to rest now!!"

Karis laughed wickedly then rushed towards Elsword. She got thrown back during their first encounter because she was too taken aback..... But Karis who possessed magic skills and ability to fly could easily take the upper hand in a close quarter combat.

Although it would be simpler to finish Elsword off from a distance with magic.....

'I couldn't savor killing Elesis close and personally so I'll have to make do with her brother.'

Karis slashed down her scythe, determined to direct all her pent-up negative emotions against Elesis towards Elsword instead. But unlike before, Elsword didn't even make an effort to defend himself.

“Kyahahahaha!!”

“Gosh, you’re so noisy.”

A chill went down Karis’ spine when that voice reached her ears.

Wait, didn’t she forget someone? Add was tied up from rewinding time, Ara was with Ran, Chung was with Helputt, Rena with Raven so Elsword who remained should be alone.....

“You seriously lost your nerves, Karis.”

At a sassy girl’s voice, Karis halted her attack then immediately twisted her body to dodge. But lightning that struck from the sky scorched her wings.

“Kyaaaah!!”

When Karis backed out while screaming, Aisha, the girl who casted the lightning just now cut off all attention on Karis. Whether small fry ran away or not didn’t matter, reprimanding Elsword was more urgent.

“What are you doing spacing out like that? You should keep your head up even if Karis mentioned Big Sister Elly!!”

Despite Aisha reprimanding him, Elsword’s expression was as if it was no big deal. Yes, he always had a face as if he wasn’t in the wrong whenever she helped him!

Aisha was about to get even more angry from Elsword’s reaction that she was so accustomed to when Elsword replied.

“I thought you’d block it for me.”

“Just how long do I have to take care of..... Huh?”

Aisha who was about to become angry blinked vacantly from the unexpected word. Elsword didn’t say anything more and turned his gaze towards the Devil.

“Aisha, can you take care of Karis?”

“What?”

“I can’t fly so I’m at a disadvantage. I’ll face the Devil so you take on Karis.”

Elsword who couldn’t fly and fought with a sword couldn’t defeat Karis easily. Even if he were to defeat her, it would be after wasting a ton of time. It wasn’t a good match up considering urgency of the current situation.

“.....Who do you think I am? I’m the great magician Aisha. I can take care of that messed up demon with just one finger.”

“Yes, I believe you. Do your best, Aisha.”

Aisha wanted to say something the moment Elsword turned towards the Devil. Maybe it was because she was still shocked by Elsword’s unexpected response and words..... but she didn’t want to let him go like this without saying anything.

But they were currently in a battle where every moment was precious. Holding Elsword back with her pointless words was a stupid thing to do. Aisha was accepting this fact regretfully.....but realized that Elsword didn’t head out right away.

“.....What is it?”

Aisha asked wondering there was something she missed, then Elsword spoke in a low voice while only looking forwards.

“I’m sorry that I couldn’t remember you all this time.”

“Ah.....”

Aisha understood what Elsword’s words meant and froze in her place. Elsword was talking about Aisha’s lonely battle of holding back the Prince of Time all by herself after parting with the El Search Party.

Elsword, with his feet still stopped and eyes looking at the direction he had to go, conveyed his feelings.

“Thank you so much all this time..... Aisha.”

“D-don’t say something stupid!!”

Aisha unintentionally shouted. Then she hastily turned her head away and snapped as Elsword stared back at her confusedly.

“I just couldn’t help but to lend my hand with few things since I’m so great! You don’t have to be so thankful!”

“.....”

“You can’t do anything without me in the first place! Don’t just simply compress all my suffering until now into couple of words like that! Even right now, Karis would have killed you if I didn’t help you. Gosh, I seriously can’t keep my eyes off you!”

It seemed her face turned red, but that wasn’t true. Not true at all!

“Don’t mention something so stupid when you can’t do anything without me! Just prepare yourself to keep thanking me from now on too!”



Elsword's lips loosened from hearing Aisha's reproach that wasn't a reproach. Then, Aisha who had her head turned away heard a refreshing sound.

It was sound of Elsword's laughter.

"Okay then, so thanks again."

"Ugh....."

"Then I'll be counting on you from now on too!"

Elsword left these words then energetically ran towards the Devil. He charged despite knowing clearly that it was hopeless. Aisha bit down on her lips while looking at Elsword's familiar yet unfamiliar back.

"This is no time for me to be immersed with emotions. So, could you please get lost on your own, Karis?"

"Haaah, haaa....."

Karis panted heavily as she pressed down on her broken wings. Aisha waved her staff lightly.

"Although D took away control over space..... You're still no match for me. Let's not waste time when the result is obvious."

"No, you..... should know all too well what the result will be if you go against Lord D."

Aisha sighed when Karis spoke out angrily. She was correct, if you compared their strengths, if Karis was rather ferocious rabbit and Aisha was a strong fox, then D was a tiger.

Not just any tiger, a tiger strong enough to leave its name in history.

Just like how Karis couldn't defeat Aisha, Aisha couldn't defeat D. It was a result that had already happened..... and this result wouldn't change easily even if Add rewind time to give everyone another chance to fight.

"That's sensible, but its not something you should be worrying about. Why don't you run away if you don't want to die?"

Aisha said this then pointed her staff towards Karis. Although Aisha was speaking tough right now, it would be difficult for her to finish off Karis quickly since she now lost control over space.

Chasing Karis away with threats then quickly going to assist Elsword should be the best option.....

But Karis shook her head in terror.

"Going against Lord D only means death....."

“Going against me also means death.”

So the rabbit is more afraid of a tiger that's far away than a fox right in front of her? Aisha started to gather mana when the threatening strategy failed. She should try to hasten the fight much as possible now that it's come to this.....

“Ah..... ah!”

In that moment, Karis suddenly made strange noises as she shivered. Aisha who was preparing a magic spell opened her eyes widely in surprise.

Unprecedented explosive mana beyond Karis' limits was flowing out of her.

“Wait, it can't be.....”

Aisha glanced back quickly to see D withdrawing the hand he stretched towards Karis. D had obviously done something to Karis.

“Hahaha, ahahahahaha!”

And that something can't be good news for the El Search Party! Aisha smiled nervously while looking at Karis' body becoming larger and emit powerful mana.

“I saw that form multiple times, but this is the first time you became this much powerful, True Karis.....”

“True Karis? Is that my new name?”

Succubus Queen who got her inner potential forced out of her by D nodded in satisfaction. Abundant power dwelling in her body right now, she was now confident she could destroy everything.

Why did D grant her this power? It must mean she should kill everything in his place!

“I understand, Lord D. I'll kill everyone for you!”

“If you can beat me that is.”

Karis after being recreated by D was unprecedently powerful. Aisha had to fight her using all her powers.

Aisha made her resolve then commenced her attacks on True Karis.

His head hurt as if it was burning. Add realized his body had already surpassed the breaking point long time ago.

He could understand why D left him alone. He would destroy himself if left alone anyways.

He could barely make do and manage to stay alive because the Fox Orb Eun left him and the Memory of Time and Space supported his calculations.

He would have died instantly from overloading his brain under normal circumstances.

But he was successful. The throne room's time all went back to how it was before. Add slowly lowered the hand he couldn't feel since long time ago.

Fatigue he had been ignoring suddenly flowed in and made his vision dizzy.

It felt like he would die if someone were to tap him with a finger. Senses were disappearing from his body as he hung on in his completely worn out state.

Add saw Elsword charge towards the Devil far away and was about to click his tongue but then paused. He didn't know since when, but fresh blood was trickling down from his mouth.

Add had literally thrown away his entire body..... to resurrect the once defeated and fallen El Search Party members.

But will they be able to win with this?

“At least.....”

Rewinding time like this to bring everyone back shouldn't have happened in any previous fights. This was certain judging from D's shocked reaction.

Add looked down at his shivering hand then made a thin smile.

No matter how this fight turned out..... Add's end won't be pretty. Internal parts of his body were breaking down even in this moment, and even if they could defeat D somehow, that didn't grant him any bright future.

Wishing for a good ending after destroying his own future was illogical.

“Mr.Add!!”

Ara looked back and screamed when Add staggered as if he was about to fall at any moment. Add wanted to shout to Ara and say stop getting distracted when she was fighting Ran. But Ran's blade was faster than Add's words.

“Kyah!!”

After getting slashed on the shoulder, Ara quickly repositioned herself and faced Ran again. But her mind was elsewhere because her movements were completely out of the fight.

Ara shouted while clashing her spear fiercely against the incoming blade.

“Wait just a little longer! I’m come to help you quickly!”

“Idiot.....”

Add smiled bitterly at her urgent voice. There was no way for Ara to help him even if she came here. But he could understand how she felt when she shouted those words.

Because Add himself was also stretching his hand towards Ran right now.

“Ah, seriously.....”

His body was in tatters and his brain became mushy because he performed an anomaly like turning back time of the present..... He obviously wasn’t in any state to fight. Never mind fighting, he couldn’t live for much longer even if he healed and recuperated after this.

But he still couldn’t just watch.

He barely managed to revive all of them. Rather than seeing them get hurt and suffer, seeing them be defeated again and fall, it would be better to rip his own eyes out.

He was planning to fight and win even if his body literally broke down.

Not only that, but that damned fox left him a word saying please take good care of Ara. This wasn’t just anyone, this was Ara. He couldn’t let her die again.

Add was making calculations again with his stiff brain when he realized there was a strange sensation on his shivering arm. He wondered if his body finally gave out and he fell on the ground, but that wasn’t the case.

Someone was holding him firmly so he wouldn’t fall and supporting his arm so he could aim properly.

“Leave the calculations to me.”

It was Eve. Add who was completely worn out thought he might be seeing things. But the owner of the hand holding his wrist to assist his aim was certainly Eve.

“I’ll send the space coordinates to the Dynamos.”

“How can you.....”

Add who didn’t know if this was a dream or not questioned unknowingly.

Of course, Eve was a Nasod and Dynamos were Nasods too so they could interact. Not only that, but since Eve summons her weapons through a dimension gate it wasn’t like she was inadequate for the job.....

Eve who was supporting Add spoke while calmly looking ahead.

“I now understand what you’ve been doing.”

“.....”

Add shuddered at those unexpected words. This wasn’t a dream. Add wished that Eve would never find out this truth even in his dreams.

The truth that the one trying to destroy her, the one who was trying to destroy the El Search Party was actually Add’s own future..... And how he jumped through time countless times to stop that fate from happening.

“No, I actually don’t understand. There’s a confusion in my memory circuits. It must be due to moving against time.”

“That’s.....”

Add didn’t know if he should be glad or not about Eve not completely understanding the truth. He closed his mouth after seeing Eve speak ever so calmly. There was nothing good from Eve knowing about the circumstances behind this fight.

“But there’s only one thing you and I have to do right now. Fight and win, am I right?”

“.....I’ll take care of myself so go help the others.”

It was true that Add was barely hanging on because Eve was supporting him but he spoke toughly. Eve replied coldly.

“I refuse.”

“Everyone is having a difficult battle. You have to join in.....”

Ara against Ran and Chung against Helputt looked evenly matched. Aisha at least looked to be advantageous against True Karis, but the fight wasn’t settled yet. If Eve was to join in this state, they could turn the tides and grab a hope for victory.

But Add’s attempt at logical persuasion was blocked with couple of words from Eve.

“Add, I won’t leave you behind when you’re about to fall. That’s because.....”

Eve hesitated for a moment then concluded with a slightly startled tone.

“You’re our precious comrade as well.”

“.....”

The words he never imagined struck his heart. Add forgot about the circumstances and looked at Eve. Eve was looking forwards with a prudish expression.

“I’m glad you returned safely, Add.”

“.....”

Add didn’t know what he should say in response so he merely nodded. His head somehow heated up and he didn’t know what this reaction entailed. Add concluded that it was due to side effect of overly pushing himself then turned his gaze towards the front.

If he couldn’t convince Eve out of her stubbornness then he had no choice but to make use of her.

“I’ll send the formulas to Reby starting now.”

“Yes, let’s start, Add.”

Eve laid her hands over Add’s hand then announced the start of a new battle.



There were no enemies left to stop Elsword now that he broke through Karis. Elsword waved his sword ferociously against the Devil.

“Haaaaaaaah!!”

Great sword with added momentum from the dash shattered the dimension distortion barrier around the Devil. The Devil who had been focusing on opening the Space-time Gate finally opened his eyes to look around at the current situation.

Chaos had ensued during the short period he had his eyes closed but he wasn’t particularly startled.

“To think he’d really turn back time.....”

The El Search Party members that once fell by his hands had all risen back up and were lively moving about. It felt like witnessing a dice he had been rolling all this time in boredom suddenly perform tricks to duplicate itself.

“But..... it’s still all within my control.”

The Devil concluded the current situation as insignificant then was about to close his eyes again but then saw Elsword swinging his sword again and frowned. It was already after 3 Dimension Distortion Barriers had broken from Elsword’s fierce attacks.

The Devil clicked his tongue in disbelief.

“Do you seriously not have a brain? Don’t you realize I’m not stomping you out of existence because I can’t be bothered with it? It would have been smart for you to stay hidden somewhere. What makes you so confident to think you can defeat me?”

10-layer barrier was an absolute shield. Foes had to put all their efforts into breaking it while the Devil could attack leisurely in meantime. This defense had never been broken before.

Even if only 3 were left, that was more than enough to eradicate Elsword then have 3 more years left over.

And Elsword knew this too.

“Being confident or not isn’t important! All this fighting will end only by defeating you!”

“No matter how much you try by yourself.....”

The Devil lightly stretched out his hand in middle of his words. Elsword who had been attacking the barrier quickly evaded and swung his sword.

Double Void Impact was nullified but the Devil fired three more immediately.

“Kugh!”

Elsword couldn't completely prepare himself for the continuing attacks. Blood seeped out of Elsword's legs, arms and head after landing on the ground.

The Devil clicked his tongue from the dissatisfying result.

"You're being really annoying. Why are you doing something so stupid when everything is finally about to end.....? I'll change all of history if you all just stay put quietly. Everyone won't even know the fact that time has changed."

"Don't you dare..... think about changing time however you want."

Elsword grabbed his sword even stronger despite his injuries. The Devil who was about to ignore Elsword suddenly became filled with rage.

"What..... did you just say?"

"I said don't change the time however you want."

Process of opening the Space-time Gate stopped if the Devil focused on battling. Elsword determined he managed to buy some time as he caught his breath.

But the Devil was seriously furious.

"You talk as if there's a problem with me changing time. What's wrong with it? What's wrong with changing the past and future to get the result I want?"

"Of course it's wrong."

Elsword's face was as if asking 'why are you asking something so obvious?'. He wasn't intending to provoke the Devil but it was still effective. The Devil started getting angry for real.

"Nonsense! Who wouldn't change the past if they got the chance?! Don't you have something you regret in the past? Don't you have any memory you want to change no matter what? You can't possibly say that you don't!"

"....."

"Don't you want to revive Elesis behind you?"

Elsword didn't answer. But the Devil sneered from seeing the anguish and pain on Elsword's face.

Yes, no one wants to lose people important to them.

"I can bring her back. In the new space-time I'm about to revamp....."

"Stop."

Elsword stubbornly shook his head. The Devil frowned from the unexpected reaction.

“You revived yourself..... but you’re saying Elesis reviving is wrong?”

“That’s not it. I can’t let you..... no, I can’t let Big Brother do whatever you want. No one should change time however they’d like.....”

The Devil clicked his tongue when Elsword spoke with a dark expression. They couldn’t talk on the same level after all.

“With such obscure words.....”

“People aren’t existences that live by themselves.”

The Devil scowled from Elsword’s answer.

“What does that mean?”

“Time isn’t for just one person. Because you did something like this, Big Brother..... times of so many people were broken. Bonds between everyone that should have existed disappeared. In the first place..... didn’t Big Sis change like that because she got caught up from you twisting time?”

Elsword’s question didn’t have any resentment or rage behind it so the Devil couldn’t answer immediately.

Although he could answer that choosing to join him was by Elesis’ own accord.....

“Time is for everyone. It shouldn’t be twisted to satisfy one person’s desire. Because that’s ruining everyone else’s time.”

“Don’t joke with.....”

“No matter how painful of a past you had, Big Brother, that doesn’t justify ridiculing the present time of everyone else living in this world.”

The Devil’s expression froze. Elsword pressed on boldly.

“You’re evading this fact and talking about gifting us with a time we want, but don’t you realize it already as well, Big Brother? That what you’re doing is wrong?”

“.....”

“I don’t want to be gifted with a time tailored for my tastes! I want a time I’ve been fighting inside all this time, the present time where I’ll continue to fight together with everyone else!!”

The Devil was silent for a long while at Elsword’s declaration. He stayed motionless for a long while as if he was struck on the head with a hammer, then finally let out a thin sigh.

“I see, you and I can’t understand each other after all. There was never a time when we could talk on the same page.....”

Soon as the Devil said this, a giant dimension gate started to open above on the throne room's ceiling. Hundreds, thousands of gravity orbs were about to rain down from there.

It was Quadruple Stardust Shower.

Attack like this would annihilate both foes and allies! Elsword became abhorred as he shouted urgently.

“Big Brother!!”

“I’ll erase everyone clean. You don’t want to turn back time? You don’t want to change the past? You want to keep fighting in this present?”

The Devil smiled sinisterly after mouthing sorrowful series of questions.

“That’s if you survive! Try saying that again after feeling the powerlessness of not being able to do anything as people you cherish break around you, Elsword!!”

He just had to teach this naïve boy how the world worked!

Just when the Devil was about to destroy everything regardless if they were allies or foes.....a chilling voice was heard all of a sudden.

“You became chattier, D.”

“.....”

Soon as the Devil turned his gaze in surprise from the voice he never imagined he would hear again, a dark-red sword flashed as if lunging like an angry snake.

Crrraack!!

Sword that shattered through the last 3 dimension distortion barriers grazed by the Devil’s cheek. He was only alive because he dodged by instinct at the very last moment. He would have died instantly otherwise.

“Reverse Circle!!”

The Devil immediately cancelled the Stardust Shower as he pulled out. He wouldn’t have cancelled it normally, but he didn’t know what might happen if he underestimated this opponent.

Elsword opened his eyes widely after looking at the person that ran in like the gale to help him.

“Big Sis!!”

Elesis who had been certainly killed before was standing perfectly healthy as if nothing had happened. Elesis didn’t look back from Elsword’s call and replied composedly instead.

“Always act first before you talk, Elsword.”

“.....Yes.”

While unable to hide his gladness, Elsword followed Elesis’ advice and stood side by side with his sister. The Devil who caught his breath after pulling back had a face of disbelief.

He should have finished off Elesis personally..... so why was she alive now?

“I was dead. But I revived from time getting turned back.”

Elesis quietly answered the Devil’s curiosity.

“This was unexpected. I didn’t think Add thought of me as his comrade too.”

“Big Brother Add is actually a good guy.”

Elsword added and Elesis nodded lightly then pointed her sword towards the Devil. This felt like a similar situation from before but it was different now.

All the dimension distortion barriers were broken and.....

“I’m sorry D, but things will be different starting now. I’m not by myself anymore.”

“You’re bluffing too much. Is it because you’re in front of your brother.....?”

Elesis dashed in instead of answering.

“You’ll have to see if I’m bluffing or not. Let’s go, Elsword!!”

“Yes, Big Sis!!”

Elsword answered strongly as he dashed in as well.

Siblings united their swords and minds as they ran towards the Devil.

Combined attacks of Elsword and now revived Elesis was coming but there were no dimension distortion barriers left.

The Devil was startled by this unexpected development but smiled sinisterly soon after.

Yes, this was the first time something like this happened during countless fights in the Time War. Add turning back time to resurrect his comrades had never happened before in the first place.....

“Maximum Strike!!”

The Devil burst out laughing for some reason then fired space-time projectiles in intervals. Elesis slashed widely to cut away the space-time projectiles flying towards her. Elsword also blocked all the Maximum Strike projectiles just like Elesis.

But the Devil used this moment to start surrounding himself with dimension distortion barriers again. But even he couldn't create 10 barriers instantly.

Elsword shouted urgently after seeing the Devil trying to quickly surround himself with barriers.

"Big Sis, we have to break that!"

"Yes!!"

Elesis held her sword in long reach then started to gather huge amount of demonic energy. So much demonic energy gathered that space surrounding the sword shimmered from heat then started getting distorted. Elsword also collected his breath as he gathered every ounce of his strength into his sword.

"Go, Elsword!!"

Elesis swung the dark-red sword, that was now huge enough to pierce through the ceiling, against the Devil. The sword with enormous amount of demonic energy compressed inside shattered through space and targeted the Devil's neck.

"Fate Smasher!!"

Some distortion barriers the Devil managed to restore broke with a loud shattering sound. But there were still 3 left. The Devil was about to counterattack leisurely but attacks from the siblings haven't ended yet.

Elsword who came running while Elesis was attacking waved his sword immediately.

"Gigantic Slash!! Haaaaaaaah!!!"

Blinding sword aura flashed as it struck and broke a dimension distortion barrier. But Elsword's strength wasn't enough to break through all of them.

The Devil was about to scoff but then his face froze after noticing Elsword's attack didn't end with just one strike.

"You muscle brain....."

Elsword was restlessly swinging his sword with immense fighting spirit.

He battered on the dimension distortion barrier with vigor of wanting to finish this fight here, with spirit of how he'd rather bite his tongue and die than retreat from here. Each and every strike being swung was filled with the power that nullified space distorting abilities.

The shock from the impacts didn't reach the Devil directly. But..... Elsword will certainly break through all the barriers!

“.....”

The Devil's face became frozen after unknowingly taking a step back. To think he'd sense fear from this idiot.....

Another barrier gave away and now only one remained to protect his body.

But the Devil didn't supplement himself with more barriers. He couldn't win by just defending..... and he couldn't accept backing out from Elsword!

“Fine, I'll play your game!!”

The Devil backed out far using Reverse Circle then called upon a Void Field with 30 meter radius. They couldn't move after getting caught by this so he just had to pick them off easily after.

It will all be over once they were caught!!

“Big Sis!”

Elsword realized the danger and stabbed his sword into the ground in front of him. He was using the power to shatter space on the ground to secure his safety.

But Elesis who came running didn't do the same as Elsword.

“I'll borrow your back.”

Elesis stepped on Elsword's back then soared up. The Devil opened his eyes widely from seeing Elesis fly towards him.

Is she trying to jump 30 meters across.....? But Void Field should bind enemies above ground too.....

“Haaaaah!!!”

A sharp shout shattered the Devil's expectations. Elesis pointed her sword forwards and was piercing through Void Field's binding force as she flew towards the Devil.

She was trying to pummel into him!

The Devil became startled as he quickly utilized his control over space. Even if Elesis was stronger than his expectations, he defeated her already once before..... He could defeat her again if he used his control over space. If he just attacked after widening their distance so her sword can't reach.....

Space wasn't widening.

The Devil became very startled when his control over space didn't work but still managed to back out. There was no time to activate Reverse Circle so he had to move sideways to avoid Elesis' trajectory.

But Elesis who flew across 25 meters used a landing technique to roll on the ground then stood back up immediately while waving her sword widely.

Her sword made a sharp arc to shatter the final dimension distortion barrier.

“.....”

“.....”

The sword stopped right beside the Devil's neck. It was a distance where even slight movement would cut across his throat. It was a situation like before but there were dimension distortion barriers protecting him back then. He was completely defenceless right now.

Elesis declared in a low voice.

“.....Checkmate.”

“So..... it's a Knight who captures the King?”

The Devil answered in low-spirits then turned his gaze. The situation right now, where his neck was right against Elesis' blade was an unprecedented crisis, but he remained calm.

The Devil's gaze headed towards Add who was supporting the other El Search Party members together with Eve.

“.....How foolish.”

The Devil shook his head exaggeratedly. His neck grazed the blade and blood got spilled but he didn't care.

Since he was the one who had been foolish.

“How extremely foolish of me. I took that idiot turning back time too lightly..... As the King of Time, time should have been my domain. It was my territory but I let it get invaded. I lost a portion of control over this throne room's time because of that..... and it seems my control over space has diminished as well.”

“.....”

D had been proclaiming himself as the King of Time, and he actually had the power to back that up..... But he thought of Add turning back time too lightly. No, his decision at the time was justified. What Add did was just an insane suicide.



“.....Checkmate.”

“So.....it's a Knight who captures the King?”

D knew Add's capabilities very well since he was his own past. Normally, Add wouldn't have lasted even a moment and dropped dead.

"Seriously, that damned fox....."

To think Add was still alive after completely turning back time..... Assistance that the Fox Orb provided was beyond his expectations.

"No, I was an idiot in the end....."

He had been too obsessed with opening the Space-time Gate. He wanted to open it soon as possible that he overlooked swarm of ants running about in his palace.

To think those swarm of ants would crawl up to his throat and try to suffocate him!

"They say even an elephant cannot beat swarm of ants..... it seems that was true."

"Is that your final word?"

Elesis asked sorrowfully.

9-member original El Search Party became scattered..... Amongst members of that group, although D and Elesis had different thoughts and goals, they had been together the longest. Aisha chose to fight against D and Raven prioritized Rena's safety.

It was finally time to end two of their relationship that lasted through the ever so long repetition of time.

"What will you do..... after you slay me?"

The Devil asked while looking far out into the distance.

"None of you will achieve your wishes when I die. Or..... will you ask that idiot instead? If I die, then the Ruler of Space-Time disappears..... and my past has the qualification to succeed that position. So I guess my past will restructure the universe according to your wishes."

"....."

"If that's the case then there's no reason for us to fight in the first place. Isn't that right? Me doing it or that guy doing it, what's the difference?"

The Devil's voice was extremely calm. He wasn't trying to convince anyone. He was asking out of curiosity. Hesitation passed by Elesis' face for a slight moment but Elsword approached from behind and replied.

"Big Brother, we won't remake the universe however we want."

“.....Then why did we fight for so long until now? You idiot, even your wish of restoring peace in Elrios and restoration of El can be achieved by going through the Space-Time Gate and restructuring the universe.”

The Devil asked with a face as if he absolutely couldn't understand.

“Elesis, the world you want where you live peacefully with your brother is possible too. What's the difference in me granting it or my past granting it?”

“.....It's true that I want such a world.”

Elesis acknowledged readily but there was no more hesitation on her face.

“Elsword and I think slightly differently. Elsword says no one should lay their hands on time since time is for everyone..... But not me, I think that someone could distort time per their own desires, for the sake of someone precious to them.”

“Big Sis.”

“But I'm not saying that's a right thing to do or it's something that should be forgiven. But I do think one could commit that kind of sin because it's too painful..... because they can't stand it.”

Elesis didn't look back and spoke while still pressing her sword against the Devil's neck.

“Yes, I understand how you feel, D. That's why I've been together with you all this time.”

“And so?”

The Devil asked with a voice devoid of any expectation.

Elesis had a personality where she never looked back once she made a decision. Her stopping the sword strike like this and talking in itself was something very exceptional.

She was making an exception because this was the Devil who she spent countless amount of time on the same side with.

“I understand how you feel..... But I couldn't let you commit that sin.”

“You're not making sense. If that's what you thought then there was no reason for you to help me in the first place.....”

“I had no ways of defeating you on my own. Even Eun, Aisha and me together had no chance of overcoming you. You're the one who's loved by time, one who could rightfully proclaim himself as Prince of Time.”

The Devil frowned in displeasure.

“Not Prince. I'm the King of Time.”

“Thus, Eun said your past had to defeat you, I waited for Elsword to grow and Aisha took on the task of holding you back until both of our goals were met.”

“You were all in it together.”

The Devil was at a lost for words but he didn't look too upset.

“And..... Eun sacrificed herself to bring your past that can defeat you here.”

“.....”

The Devil didn't want to but he had no choice but to admit it.

He took Add too lightly. Add was a mere dice for the Devil. He considered Add turning back time of the present as a suicide and never worried about how his control over Space-Time could be shaken if Add were to succeed.

The Space-time Gate, his sole wish that he spent almost endless amount of time waiting for was right in front of him. Why would he worry about a weakling attempting something clearly impossible?

But thanks to the Fox Orb that Eun left behind, and because Add forced the Memory of Time and Space into his body with the determination of burning his life away, he was successful in resurrecting everyone in the El Search Party..... and he even blocked the Devil's control over space.

Even if Elesis and Elsword came at the Devil together, even if their combination was extraordinary..... The Devil would have defeated them with ease long as he still had control over space.

The King of Time's arrogance of thinking he could stomp down on anyone with brute force any time he wanted had led to his downfall.

“And I could point my sword against your neck right now because grown up Elsword was with me. Eun's sacrifice, Add's determination and Elsword's growth..... defeated you.”

“Kukukukuk.....”

Yes, Elesis was right. The Devil finally admitted his defeat.

“I see..... So why are we still talking? Are you trying to convince me? Will you ask me to stop opening the Space-Time Gate?”

“.....”

“Don't joke with me. Does everything end with just a single defeat? Isn't there that thing you guys always say?”

The Devil spoke the words as if he was mocking.

“If you lost this time then you just have to win next time.”

“That’s.....”

The Devil scoffed when Elsword became surprised.

“Did you think this phrase was for you guys alone? Just why do you think I have been rolling the dice all this time? I’ve been waiting and waiting, thirsting for the result I wanted..... Do you honestly think I’ll give up after just one defeat?”

“You probably will never give up. Too much time has passed to give up now.”

Elesis concluded coldly with a bitter tone.

“Your longing for Eve is.....not just an obsession anymore, it’s a sickness.”

“Eve?”

Elsword couldn’t understand why Eve was being mentioned right now. But the two conversing didn’t have any intention to explain.

The Devil looked at Elesis with extreme displeasure then averted his gaze.

“So? You’ll slay me..... then what? What will Ara do now that Eun is dead? What about you who became a traitor to Elrios? Do you think everything will end with happily ever after once I’m gone?”

The Devil’s words sounded as if he was begging for his life at a first glance, but it was actually different. His expression was ever so cold.

He was sneering.

“That guy who did something so ludicrous like turning back time of the present is my past. Is there any grantee that he won’t become me?”

“.....”

“Will he adjust to and live inside this broken world? No, in the first place..... that guy’s goal is to return to the past. And he doesn’t know how to give up. And because he doesn’t know how to give up..... he becomes me.”

The Devil mocked. He mocked himself who was finally about to achieve his goal but blew everything because of single act of carelessness. He also mocked his foes who managed to stop him but will never achieve their wishes.

He mocked, ridiculed..... and sympathized with all of them.

“We cannot escape from this prison of time. Alright, kill me already. Kill me so it can start all over again.”

“You’re the one who made that prison, Big Brother. I.....”

“Shut up, Elsword.”

The Devil glared at Elsword with gaze filled with rage.

“You’re so high and righteous. It must be nice to be so popular and loved by everyone. But not everyone is like you. They can’t just discard all their sorrows, say that past is just a past then move on, or say that time is for everyone so no one should lay their hands on it..... They can’t all make righteous and just decisions like you.”

“Big Brother.....”

“Don’t address me as Big Brother! Just like you said, me and that pitiful guy are different! You guys will never understand me! I never wanted anyone to understand me anyways so just shut up already!!”

Elsword’s expression turned blank from hearing the Devil’s hateful shout. Elesis slightly pressed her sword on the Devil’s neck but he didn’t stop shouting.

“You never lost anything for real!! You never lost something truly precious so shut your mouth!! Go play being a righteous hero on your own!”

“.....Stop.”

Elesis’ blade pressed into the Devil’s neck and blood started spilling even more. But the reason the Devil closed his mouth wasn’t because he was afraid of the sword, it was because he didn’t like how he got so riled up.

Elesis sighed.

“D, what you’re saying is right. It’s not like peace will suddenly return to Elrios once you’re gone..... and Add might try to go back to the past then make the same mistakes you did. The world could be much more difficult place to live in than the universe you were trying to create.”

“And?”

“But that’s something those of us remaining should deal with. It’s not something you should worry about.”

Ever so cold response. It was a cruel answer saying that the Devil who was about to die here had no reason to worry about what’s to come.

The Devil suddenly burst out laughing. On second thought, Elesis was absolutely correct.

“Kukukuk, of course. I..... must have fought for too long.”

“Also, I’ll keep an eye on Add so he won’t become like you. So don’t worry.”

The Devil shook his head.

“No, no matter what you do, you can’t stop my obsession.....”

“I’ll stop Big Brother Add if he does something wrong.”

The Devil looked displeased when Elsword spoke strongly but he didn’t reply to him.

Elesis’ face suddenly became sorrowful.

“So this is goodbye then, D.”

“Yes.”

Maybe if he tried whatever he can to get out of this..... No, Elesis’ sword will be faster no matter what he tried.

After preparing for his end, the Devil’s took a slight glance behind him. He was looking towards the place beyond the curtain where the throne was.

“It’s annoying how that damned fox is already in the netherworld before me..... I’ll send her your regards.”

“Alright, my Prince.”

Elesis quietly said her farewell.

“As your knight..... I’ll end your life!”

Sword strike was flying towards him. The Devil closed his eyes as he thought everything will finally end.....

But there was no pain. Was it because Elesis’ sword strike was too sharp? The Devil thought this as he unknowingly opened his eyes, but the scenery waiting for him wasn’t the netherworld.

“Kugh.....”

Elesis was staggering as she grabbed her shoulder and backed out. It was an injury as if a surprise attack hit her. But who could have landed this kind of surprise attack on Elesis at this point?

The Devil’s gaze landed on Elsword who was supporting Elesis.

Elsword should have gotten furious since his sister was attacked..... But Elsword’s face had turned pale.

After seeing what was behind the Devil's back.

“It can't be.....”

The Devil laughed in doubt as he turned around. There was no way a miracle happened after all this time.

Curtain covering the throne flew away.

And the Devil blinked vacantly after seeing the girl who was sitting on that throne. The girl who he thought had stopped moving forever was slowly raising her head.

The scene he had been longing for all this time, but the scene he never expected to see once again. The Nasod that made him conquer space and time and become a Devil rather than expect some sort of miracle from god.

Time that was thought to have stopped for eternity started moving.

“Code Battle Seraph, Start”

The sole time the Devil wished to turn back.



Time that was thought to have stopped for eternity started moving.

2. Emotionless Angel and Insane Devil

Gazes of everyone in the battlefield turned when a white beam of light suddenly struck Elesis.

Ran and Helputt withdrew their weapons and turned around. True Karis also flew away to safe distance. Everyone's gazes focused on one point amidst the abrupt silence.

Add gasped from witnessing the girl who just landed beside the Devil. It was same no matter how many times he looked.

The girl standing beside the Devil was Eve.

".....It's me."

Eve who was supporting Add and helping him with space coordinate calculations trailed her words. Add spoke gravely after confirming he wasn't hallucinating.

"Just what is....."

"I'm not sure. I had no information that different versions of myself existed."

There were vague hints of turmoil mixed inside Eve's voice. Her expression didn't change but her hand that was supporting Add was shaking thinly.

Add unknowingly grabbed Eve's hand tightly. He didn't know what he should say, but it felt like he had to at least say something.

"I might be able to explain. That is....."

"Is that me in the future?"

Eve reached a level-headed conclusion despite still being overwhelmed by an indescribable feeling. Add was impressed by her cool-headedness as he nodded to acknowledge.

If D was Add's future, then that pure white Eve should be the current Eve's future. But atmosphere of that Eve was somewhat strange to confirm this theory. Why was that Eve standing on the Devil's side? According to Eun, didn't Add turn into the Devil because he was too obsessed with Eve?

Couldn't the Devil just go back to the past if he had Eve's core? Why was he going out of his way to open the Space-Time Gate when he had Eve on his side?

Could it be that he couldn't steal Eve's core after all.....?

"Don't get any wrong ideas."

The Devil answered coldly. He must have read Add's thoughts from his expression.

“It’s not just the core that’s required. Codes inside the core are needed as well. If the core is a hardware, then the code is a software. You should already know that both are required.”

“Then.....”

Did it mean that while this other Eve looked fine on the outside, she wasn’t fine on the inside? That’s why the Devil couldn’t obtain the core? This other Eve who haven’t said a word since she appeared was indeed strange.

If original Eve stubbornly insisted that she had no emotions, then this future Eve’s insistence was on a whole different level.

Add and Eve were standing in front of her but this other Eve wasn’t paying any attention to them. She didn’t even look at the Devil standing right beside her and only stared far out into the distance.

“Just what happened.....?”

“She’s merely broken. To the point where she’s irreparable.”

The Devil spoke as if it was something trivial, but his expression looked strangely uncomfortable.

There exists a damage that even the Devil who possesses power to control time and space can’t repair?

No, how did such damage occur in the first place if such powerful Devil was beside this other Eve?

“How.....?”

Add who was about to speak suddenly understood everything from the Devil’s expression. Although there were no words exchanged, two man’s thoughts united in that one moment.

Add got the order wrong.

Eve didn’t end up like that after Add turned into the Devil. Eve ended up like that then Add turned into the Devil after.

“It was because I was selfish. That’s all.”

“.....”

The Devil slowly closed his eyes as if he didn’t want to mention the exact details. It was an overly relaxed attitude to show in front of his enemies but both Add and Eve couldn’t bring themselves to attack the Devil at this moment.

The Devil’s voice contained that much of an overwhelming regret.

“I can’t forgive this failure. I can never leave such an error unfixed. Never.....”

“So, that’s why you did something like this.....”

Add sighed in response to the Devil in an understanding tone. But Eve asked as if she still couldn’t understand.

“Then why did you try to destroy me?”

“.....”

Add wanted to know that as well but he didn’t ask because it wasn’t a topic he wanted to bring up in Eve’s presence.

But Eve pressed for an answer as she looked straightly at the Devil.

“If that’s my future, then it should be my other possibility. So why were you trying to destroy me?”

“.....I just needed some variables. That’s all.”

The Devil answered with his eyes still closed. Eve’s voice became even lower.

“Add, look at me and answer.”

“.....”

“Add, look at me and speak.”

The Devil sighed as he shook his head.

“Don’t call me Add. I have no wishes or right to be called that. I never cared for such name in the first place. I threw all that away when I started the Time War.”

“You’ve been doing all of this because you were trying to fix me after I was broken?”

Eve abruptly poked at the truth, Add couldn’t do anything but to listen, and the Devil chose to keep silent. Add understood the truth despite there being no explanations.

Dice rolls. The act of D attacking and overwhelming Eve and the El Search party was nothing more than data collection.

To search for a way to return that Eve to normal.

“Is that the truth of this broken world?” Eve continued to press for an answer.

“.....How stupid.”

The Devil finally opened his eyes then sighed. He looked strangely relaxed compared to how arrogant and destructive he was acting before.

Was it because he saw the future Eve activate again? Or was it because he was being questioned by the present Eve?

“I only wanted to obtain the time I wanted. I didn’t particularly do this to fix you. Don’t get the wrong idea.”

“.....”

“There’s no way I’d be interested in a Nasod that broke on her own because she was covering for me.”

The Devil’s words were very heartless..... but there was a complicated feeling of regret mixed inside his gaze as he stared at the future Eve.

The Devil, a mad beast that had been running rampant, had suddenly calmed down.

“But.....”

The Devil sighed as he slowly stretched his hand out towards the other Eve standing beside him.

“So, it’s Queen who comes to the King’s rescue when he’s in danger.”

“.....”

Add understood by reasoning that this situation was dangerous. You could tell that this other Eve was very powerful from how she stopped Elesis with a single strike. Add nervously calculated defensive formulas but the Devil’s face looked quite relaxed and peaceful right now.

It didn’t look like he will attack any time soon.

Amidst the silences, Ran and Helputt slowly backed out beside the Devil. Chung, Ara, and Elsword who was supporting Elesis also naturally gathered around Add and Eve.

“That’s.....”

Elesis tried to speak but coughed out blood instead.

“Bis Sis! Don’t talk! Just rest for now! No, cut me! You can recover by doing that, right?!”

“I can’t use that to recover from those two’s attacks. That Eve is.....”

Elesis had the ability to cut down her enemies and recover herself, but injuries received from the Devil and this white Eve was an exception. Two of their existences were against the natural law. It was the same principle as how you couldn’t recover from an injury received from a ghost with merely potions and bandages.

An empty voice finished what Elesis was about to say.

“An Angel.”

“.....”

“She’s my Angel.”

The Devil laughed emptily as he slowly stroked Eve’s, no, according to him, the Angel’s face standing beside him.

His hand moved as if handling a precious doll. Eve who just got called an Angel showed no reaction to the Devil’s touch. She showed completely no response except blinking occasionally.... You couldn’t see her as anything but a doll.

“.....”

Eve stared at the interaction between the Devil and the Angel with an extremely reluctant face. Add was.....also encompassed by an indescribable feeling as he looked at the scene. Here he was battling seriously against despair, even sacrificing his own health, then all of a sudden, it felt like he witnessed a compromising scene.

This scene of the Devil(Add in the end), touching the Angel(She’s Eve no matter how you look at her) dearly..... He didn’t get why everyone had to gather around and watch this uncomfortable scene.

Aisha clicked her tongue.

“To think she’d move in this situation. Didn’t she stop moving permanently, Prince of Time?”

“.....”

The Devil’s hand that was dearly stroking the Angel’s hair stopped. Aisha narrowed her eyes then frankly spoke the truth.

“Reason behind this whole crisis was because Eve from that time whom you’re calling an Angel lost her emotions.....and stopped moving. So why is she moving now?”

“.....Wait a moment.”

Eve intruded in on the conversation.

“Just what happened, Aisha?”

“That’s one of your possibilities. A Battle-Type Nasod that lost her emotions and closed her heart.”

“I never had emotions from the start.”

Eve managed to leave a prudish remark despite still seeming to be in quite a turmoil. This sudden ceasefire, and the appearance of another Eve called 'the Angel' was surrounding both sides in confusion.

Add frowned as the mood began to turn strange. The Devil didn't look like he would start fighting any time soon. This whole situation could get dragged on needlessly.

"So what?"

Add could taste blood whenever he spoke. He didn't know how long his damaged body would last so they had to finish this fight quickly.

Add smiled sinisterly so he would not lose to the gradual tides of pain coming over him.

"I don't know if that's actually Eve or something else but I get it now that it's something unnatural. So you've been pulling this insane farce merely so you could repair some broken Nasod?"

"Mr.Add."

But wasn't she still Eve? Ara warned Add carefully but he didn't listen.

"And here I thought. Gosh....this is seriously stupid. It's so unsightly....."

Add twisted his lips.

"I still had some expectations since you're my future and all but this is the truth? What you wanted to obtain by conquering Space and Time was..... merely repairing a single broken Nasod?"

"No, it's still not perfect....."

The Devil who had been stroking the Angel's face spoke in a low voice. It seemed, for the Devil, observing the Angel in front of him was more important than Add's words or anything else going on around him.

"Once shut-down emotion circuit cannot be recovered. To return everything back to normal.... Space-Time has to be restructured."

The Devil took his hand off the Angel while letting out a perplexed sigh. He then turned his gaze towards the El Search Party.

"But this is the first time she activated like this again. I'm overjoyed. Thank you for struggling to bring about this result, El Search Party."

"Shut your mouth, it's disgraceful."

Add reprimanded sternly.

“We’ll resume the battle starting now. Everyone, blow away anything that stands in your way with everything you got.”

Then Add’s detailed battle instructions followed in a low voice so their enemies couldn’t hear. But everyone looked reluctant to fight.

Elsword who had been tending to Elesis’ wound carefully expressed his opinion.

“.....Do we really have to Big Brother?”

“What else is there to do?”

Everyone had difficulties speaking back to Add when he shot back coldly. Heat had disappeared from the group that had been enflaming their fighting spirits even against their own family.

Although D was Add’s future self..... he was an evil they had to stop. Everyone had no hesitation regarding fighting D, but the story was different with the Angel, the newly appeared Eve.

They were.....unsure now after hearing that the Devil’s reason for doing all of this was for Eve’s sake.

Wasn’t there a way they could settle this peacefully by talking? Did they really have to defeat those two by force? In such manner?

This doubt was dwelling in everyone’s hearts despite no one speaking it directly.

“Don’t mind and resume combat. I’ll also do my best.”

Eve opened her mouth as if she read the group’s doubt. Ara who had been nervously looking at the Angel looked back in surprise.

“But that’s you, Ms.Eve! If we fight, you might be.....”

“Why didn’t you worry about that when fighting D?”

Add spoke sarcastically. Defeating D who was Add’s future might bring direct harm to Add. It was an obvious consequence to think about. But wasn’t bringing that up now only after another Eve appeared a bit too harsh on Add?

Ara hastily shook her head after understanding what Add meant.

“No, Mr.Add! I don’t mean it’s okay for you to get hurt!”

Aisha started explaining in a sharp tone.

“Add and Eve won’t get hurt from fighting them. The Angel and Devil are already existences separated from the timeline of this space-time. It won’t be wrong to say they are ghosts. Those two

can only exist physically inside this throne room. Of course, D, the Prince of Time can exert his power outside using other methods, but they are fundamentally ghosts that are bound to this place.”

“.....So they are no different from wandering spirits. That’s why they can exist despite being same entities.”

Aisha gave a cheeky response.

“They are wandering spirits that have the qualification of opening the Space-Time Gate. They are ever so close to an existence called god. Although it seems they lost their control over space-time thanks to you turning back the throne room’s time.”

Aisha spoke sternly then gripped her staff even tighter.

“We have no other choice. They will try to open the Space-Time Gate and restructure the universe..... and we have to stop them! No matter what!”

“.....Yes, Aisha’s right.”

Elesis stood up while wobbling. Elsword saw how Elesis was barely standing despite her injuries and quickly tried to support her.

“It’s fine, Elsword.”

Elesis shook her head then sighed after looking at the Angel.

“Eve who haven’t shown any reaction during the countless flow of time before..... is moving now for some reason. I don’t know the reason either, but today is the day when we end this long fight. We don’t have the choice of giving up the fight.”

“But.....”

In contrast to how Ara was still hesitant, Elsword looked like he made up his mind because he spoke strongly.

“I’m reluctant but we cannot back down now!”

“Understood. I’ll take on my father.”

Chung also made up his mind. Aisha sent Chung a gaze as if she was proud of him then shrugged.

“Leave that stuck-up succubus to me. I’ll blow her away immediately.”

Ara sent a strange gaze to Add when everyone resolved themselves to fight.

Add frowned from Ara’s gaze that seemed to be pleading for something.

“Mr.Add, can I ask you just one thing?”

“.....I refuse.”

He struck the nail in the coffin since it felt like Ara was going to say something stupid again. But Ara didn't listen to him unlike usual.

“If this fight ends, please make Ms.Eve happy.”

“.....”

Hey, this isn't the time to say something like that! Also, no matter how you think about it, the way you said it have so many ways of being misunderstood.

Of course.....Add experienced enough of this overly soft-minded El Search Party to get a gist of Ara intention when she said this.

Fighting against another Eve and D, after it was revealed that D was fighting to fix another Eve is painful = they are saying it's fine to defeat the two of them but it still feels uncomfortable = So two of them should get together and be happy after the fight!

In contrast to Add who became frozen solid, Eve remained calm.

“Ara, I appreciate your thoughts but don't impose something like that. I'm not too glad to hear it.”

“But.....”

“Everything can be decided after we fight without any regrets right now.”

Ara gave a regretful sigh after Eve's stern conclusion, then she grabbed her spear and turned her attention towards the enemies.

The Devil, now in command of Ran, Helputt, True Karis and the Angel standing beside him was quietly looking at the El Search Party. He could have easily taken the advantage by attacking first..... but it looked as if he waited on purpose.

“Time is passing.....”

Or maybe he wanted this time to last even a slight moment longer.

The Devil murmured in a raspy voice then narrowed his eyes.

“It's fine now. Things I never imagined are happening..... but I'll clean up everything once and for all.”

“.....Let's finish this, King of Time and Space.”

Immediately after Add's reply, members from both sides ran in towards each other.

It was the final battle.

Even as the fierce battle for control of space-time was occurring, two people were completely apart from it all.

They were Raven and Rena.

Even when the Devil's life almost ended, even when the Angel moved to reset the situation and the final battle ensued, Raven didn't move.

He only had his eyes closed as he disregarded the situation.

“.....”

Whether Add won or the Devil won..... Raven had no intention to get involved. He had no interest in destiny of this universe.

Opinions of the original 9 member El Search Party became divided once Add turned into D and proclaimed himself as the King of Time.

There were 5 people that became aware of the broken world by D. Eun, Elesis, Aisha, Raven and.....

Eun considered Add was the key to defeating D and tried to assist him during the course of endless Time War. Elesis considered Elsword's growth as the answer and tried to promote Elsword's growth. Aisha took control of space and stopped D from opening the Space-Time Gate all by herself.

Although their methods differed, they all had the same desire of wanting to stop D. But..... Raven didn't have such a thing.

“.....”

So he merely watched. Fate of this universe didn't matter to him. He'll be satisfied long as he can protect the precious life in his arms right now.....

Raven unconsciously added strength to his arms holding Rena then suddenly flinched. Strange touch was moving down along his Nasod hand.

She smiled weakly when Raven looked down.

“.....Since when did you?”

He had certainly made her lose consciousness. Raven wasn't too adept at these types of skills, but the one he used on Rena was the one he learned specifically from D.

There had been no instances of Rena waking up in this situation before.....

"It's probably..... because Add turned back time."

Turning back time didn't end with just resurrecting those that were dead. It turned back what happened into how they were before. Thus, Rena who fell unconscious returned to how she was before. Even her gravely injured arms and legs healed back to normal.

Raven who had been unknowingly meeting Rena's perplexed gaze hastily tried to put his hand over Rena's forehead. But Rena's pretty hand covered over his hand.

"Don't do it, Raven."

".....Rena."

"You shouldn't do something like this."

Her voice was gentle as if lecturing a child, but her firm will was conveyed to Raven.

"Because Add turned back time..... I somewhat got a grasp on the whole situation. About how this isn't the first time this happened. I still can't quite believe it, but those nostalgic feelings apparently weren't just a dream."

"....."

I never wished for you to know. Rena spoke carefully when Raven kept silent.

"Raven, I don't know why you're choosing to be a bystander to all of this. But you must certainly have a good reason for it. Even so, I have to fight to help those kids."

".....No."

Raven spoke stubbornly. His Nasod hand's gripped tighter as if not wanting to let Rena go. Rena gave a confused sigh.

"What are you afraid of?"

"....."

It was clear that Raven wasn't siding with D for some simple reason. Rena asked regretfully.

"We can end all this fighting if you and Elesis..... No, if all of us combine our strengths."

"It's too dangerous."

Rena couldn't help but to laugh from Raven's simple but stern answer.

"It's a fight, of course it will be dangerous. But if we don't risk the danger....."

"I didn't mean it like that."

Raven sighed. No matter what he said..... Rena won't change her mind.

There was no way Rena would overlook the El Search Party in danger.

That's why Raven had used the method of making her unconscious until now..... but that won't work anymore. The method Raven used took advantage of weakness in one's heart. It won't work on Rena now.

Raven shook his head then let Rena down as he slowly stepped back. Rena was momentarily perplexed after getting to stand on her own feet then her face froze after seeing what Raven did next.

Raven raised his blade.

"I can't let you go to that fight."

"....."

His words were short but the meaning was clear. He was telling Rena that she had to defeat him first if she wanted to go help the El Search Party.

Rena became very startled by Raven's declaration. Her face slowly started to become enclosed with sorrow.

"Will you not explain why you're stopping me?"

"No matter what I say, you'll try to fight D as a member of the El Search Party. Countless times until now is a proof to this."

Rena momentarily searched for words to reply to Raven's stern attitude but shook her head in the end. It was clear that Raven wouldn't listen even if she pleaded.

He wouldn't have taken away Rena's consciousness otherwise.

And the El Search Party was increasingly in danger as more time passed. Raven could achieve his goal by just stalling for time.

".....It can't be helped then."

She didn't like it but she had no choice but to clear open a path. Rena slowly raised her bow.

Time War.

A fight to bring about a different result by repeating time breathtaking amount of times.

What was this fight for in the first place? Was it so D who took control of time could roll the dice as many times as he wanted? Was that really the only reason?

Ara who ran at the head of the El Search Party swung her spear with this question in her mind. Ran who came running first amongst the enemies easily deflected her spear.

“.....Your strikes are light. Is it due to Eun’s absence?”

Ran’s blade flew in quickly aiming for the opening in Ara’s defense after her failed attack. Ara quickly pulled her body out while waving her spear. It was true that Ara skills fell behind overall..... but she was skilled enough to fight equally against Ran if she assumed a defensive stance.

Basis of Ran- no, Aren and Ara’s strength was Haan family martial arts. They knew each other’s tactics and skills like an open book. Ran didn’t chase after Ara and spoke calmly.

“Come at me with Flying Kite.”

“.....”

Flying Kite was one of the highest-grade skills amongst the skills Ara learned when she awakened her Memory of Time and Space. The skill did actually contribute heavily in defeating Ran back in Hamel.

“Elder Brother Aren.”

“Do we have any need for talk now?”

Ran looked at Ara with a subdued gaze. Ara hesitated for a moment then tried to open her mouth when a sharp voice came from above them.

“What are you doing Ran?! Don’t tell me you’re going easy because she’s your sister..... Uwah!”

True Karis who was about to attack Ara dodged then pulled out due to Aisha’s fireball.

“.....”

This made Ran frown but Ara continued the conversation.

“Why have you been fighting all this time Elder Brother?”

“Why do you ask?”

Ran's cold tone was conveying 'don't ask something so pointless'. But Ara didn't back down.

"For me..... at first, it was to return Elder Brother back into a human. But after meeting everyone in the El Search Party, I resolved myself to defeat any adversaries even if that may be you, Elder Brother, so I can stand together with them."

"Then you should do just that. If you can."

Ara shook her head to refuse.

"That's my reason. I don't know your reason, Elder Brother. You knew that the time was being repeated over and over again, am I right?"

"....."

"This wasn't the first time me, and everyone else in the El Search Party have fought. We kept fighting inside this infinitely repeating time. Although I can't quite bring myself to believe it still....and it's terrifying to recall..... but those events certainly happened."

Ara slowly raised her gaze to face Ran.

"I tried to turn you back to normal in this eternal battle..... and kept failing. I'll run out of strength and fall in Velder, or in Hamel, or maybe even in Feita..... That's the result I've met until now."

"....."

"You knew that I failed countless times already. Wasn't that why back in Hamel, you invited me to watch the end of time together with you?"

There was no answer, but Ara could understand Ran's feeling.

Finally..... she could begin to understand why Ran made such an offer at that time.

"So, you knew this fight was the Time War, and that it has been repeated time and time again..... Then just what is it that you want out of all of this, Elder Brother?"

Ara and the El Search Party were basically dices so they had no awareness of this broken world.

But didn't Ran know from the start? And it was difficult to say that he was enjoying this endlessly repeating battle.

Just what did Ran hope to gain by assisting D?

"What I want..... huh...."

Ran answered his sister's question with a completely empty voice. It wasn't that he was trying to avoid the question..... his tone was as if he really couldn't remember.

“Unlike all of you, I do remember most of those times but don’t remember at the same time. There’s no meaning to those times. I’m at a loss for an answer if you ask me what I want at this point.”

“.....”

“There was something I wanted at the start..... but it’s vague now. No, the goal is still the same but I question myself if that’s what I really want.”

Motivation slowly started to return to Ran’s eyes while he spoke almost as if he was talking to himself. It was a drastic change as if life was being imbued into a statue.

“.....Although I’m doubtful, I can’t change my goal now. That goal is what defines me at this point. I’ve been moving forward for so long that I can’t change my direction now.”

“So, what is it that you want?”

“There’s a woman I must meet.”

There was a bitterness mixed into Ran’s voice.

“She probably won’t remember me. Even if time were to turn back from D granting my wish as he restructures the universe..... I don’t know if that meeting will be in a form I want. Even if I get to meet her again, I’m not sure if that’s what I really want now.”

“.....”

“But I still have to meet her. This goal is the only thing supporting me.”

Ran’s eyes started to become enflamed with will. Ara’s question had awakened the desire that had been dormant inside Ran for a long time.

Ara’s voice became quieter.

“So, you did something so terrible to our hometown to achieve that goal?”

“It’s something I’ve done so many times already to the point where it’s tedious now.”

Ara’s face became filled with sorrow at Ran’s words. Ara also understood that it was difficult to sense value in acts that were repeated continuously.

Tomorrow has its value because it’s different from today.

What meaning was there to tomorrow if it was same as today? And if the day after tomorrow is the same once again and this repeated endlessly?

“So, that’s why you’ll assist D..... and strike me down?”

“To achieve my goal, yes.”

Ran gripped his blade even tighter. Ara looked at him ever so sadly with her mouth shut tightly.

She tried to hold back..... but tears eventually trickled down her cheeks.

Paths of these siblings had diverged completely in this immemorial flow of time. No amount of talking would make them converge again.

No matter how sorrowful and heartbreaking it was, it was time to decide.

“I’m sorry, Elder Brother. But I can’t let you do as you wish.”

“Then try to stop me..... if you can!”

Ran shouted then dashed towards Ara. In that moment, Ara who concentrated all her body’s energy into her feet also jumped off the ground.

She moved even quicker than her tear drop hitting on the ground!

“Flying Kite!”

Ara dashed at a speed that couldn’t be caught with naked eyes as she struck with her spear. Fatal attacks flew in towards Ran with each flash of light.

Flying Kite was certainly an amazing skill. It was only passed down as a spoken legend and it was an exquisite skill even Aren couldn’t master.

But you could block it if you anticipated it was coming!

Clank! Clank! Clank! While hiding his uneasiness, Ran used every senses available to him to wave his blade. Making his blade clash with the spear was the best he could hope for. He couldn’t do anything about receiving cuts and stabs all over his body.

But Flying Kite was a skill that drained Ara’s stamina drastically so it was Ran’s victory if he could hold out just a bit longer!

Ran postured himself to avoid fatal wounds much as possible as he prepared for a counterattack after realizing he made his 6th successful block. His eyes could catch Ara’s movements now unlike before. Flying Kite’s effectiveness was running out so this was the time to counter!

Ran smiled in satisfaction of victory as he stabbed his blade towards Ara’s chest. Ara who was just dashing in will never react in time.....

Girl’s eyes that were scattering tears but containing a strong will struck at his heart.

“.....”

Those eyes...he should have seen them somewhere. Ran unconsciously blinked blankly at this sense of déjà vu. Those eyes that he couldn't remember clearly, but saw long ago.....

Sasha.

“Ah.....”

This was probably what he wanted to see one more time. White spear stabbed towards Ran's chest the moment he exclaimed.

There was no pain.

Steel and steel, white and black armors clashed. In middle of a contest of strength to push each other away, Chung asked regrettably.

“Father, why are you still trying to stand on D's side?”

“.....”

Helputt only grunted and didn't answer. Chung shouted wholeheartedly.

“I've shown you plenty of the El Search Party's and my strength! Chances of defeating D will become higher if father lends us your strength right now!”

“Then what happens if he isn't defeated?”

“Pardon me?”

Depressed voice flowed out from Helputt's helmet.

“Even if I help all of you and fight against D, what do you think will happen when we fail? Do you honestly think I haven't thought about going against D myself? And do you think I don't know what will happen as a result?”

“.....”

Helputt obviously had the same thoughts as Chung initially. No, not just a thought, Helputt probably had times when he put his thoughts into action.

“Just where is the proof that it will be different this time?!”

“.....Kugh!!”

Chung's legs started to get pushed back gradually. Helputt was displaying unprecedented strength as if he was releasing all his pent up frustration.

But Chung couldn't let himself be beaten. If Chung fell here, there was no one left to guard Add and Eve at the back. It wasn't a set rule, but everyone had an intuition that this fight was over if one of Add or D fell.

"Then just what....."

He won't get pushed back anymore. Chung shouted loudly right in front of Helputt's surprised face.

"Then just what is it that you want, father?!"

"Ugh?!"

"Because it didn't work out last time, it won't work out again. Is that your conclusion father?!!"

Chung's words struck Helputt's heart.

"Father, you must have seen countless battles that I don't know about. That's why you must have made such radical choice of turning your back on Hamel and joining hands with the demons! I do understand. But that doesn't make that choice a righteous one!!"

"Then what is righteous?!!"

Helputt who had been getting pushed back by Chung's sudden counterattack shouted angrily then started to hold his ground. Helputt retorted when two of their strengths came to an equilibrium.

"You don't know about the despair of this broken time! About this time that keeps repeating itself no matter how much you struggle!"

"Yes father, I won't know well as you with fragmentary memories I have!"

Chung's continuing words..... will be a cruel attack to his father. Chung's face became momentarily filled with anguish inside his helmet but he made up his mind.

He had to defeat Helputt to lead this battle into victory.

"But even so, I won't cowardly give up like you, father! No matter how hopeless the situation may seem, I won't submit to it and go down the unrighteous path!"

"....."

Helputt's movements instantly stopped. His heart became stifled soon as he heard Chung's words and..... he literally broke down.

There shouldn't be any father that could maintain his composure after being called a coward by his own son.

Not only that, but to think he'd hear such words from a son he tried to protect no matter what from this Time War!

Helputt got pushed back far because his stance completely broke down after showing a huge opening. Chung spun his destroyer around and aimed it forwards.

"I'm sorry."

There were no more words.

Ran opened his eyes narrowly and looked down. White spear had stopped directly in front of his chest.

There was no pain because he wasn't stabbed.

".....What is this?"

Ran let out an empty sigh. Even though this was a fight that had been repeated countless times, they were fighting with their lives on the line..... This really spoiled the mood.

Ara who gave up on taking Ran's life at the very last moment slowly withdrew her spear.

"Elder Brother, you lost to me."

"I won't go back to being a human even if you do this. Let me tell you since we're on the topic. You fought countless times trying turn me back but there wasn't a single time that you succeeded."

Ran mocked bitterly. This revelation was obvious since the El Search Party had never defeated D, but listening to it directly from Ran's mouth was different.

Ara was shocked internally but her will didn't waver.

"Elder Brother Aren, give me a chance to turn you back into a human."

"That's not even funny....."

Ran sent his sister a sympathetic gaze.

She wasn't too bright in worldly affairs and used to worry him a lot. But to think she'd say something so naive after coming this far...

"Do you think that can happen just by wishing? Situation in this broken world is always the same. There were times when trivial things had changed but the general flow is always similar. Only the place and time where you guys were defeated changed, there was never a time when I turned back to a human."

“No.”

Ara shook her head adamantly.

“That’s because Elder Brother never thought about going back to being a human.”

“.....”

“It’s because you decided the history and time was fixed and gave up.”

Ara’s words were right on the mark. Ran obviously didn’t cooperate with D from the start..... He resisted in the beginning and tried various attempts to escape but all those tries only confirmed that there was nothing he could do to end the Time War.

His role was to be forced into participating in this endlessly repeating time, the game of dice rolls.

Ran gave up in the end and accepted this truth. He also had his wish of meeting with the Water Priestess Sasha which was the gift that D was going to grant him. But the despair that nothing will change no matter what he tried had consumed him.

Ran unknowingly spoke out because his sister, whom he thought was only innocent and naïve, was now sending him such righteous and imposing gaze that seemed to be piercing right through him.

“What a joke. Why do I have to go back to being a human? I’m enjoying killing humans as a demon so much.....”

“Elder Brother, don’t say such things even if it’s a lie.”

Ara must have become very upset because she shook her head sorrowfully.

“If that’s what you really thought, then you wouldn’t have made such suggestion to me in Hamel.”

“.....I don’t remember too well.”

Ran closed his mouth after realizing his answer was too empty.

Was it because he saw Sasha’s face in the brink of death? He was talking too much unlike himself.

Ara who dropped her spear approached Ran slowly. Ran instinctively waved his blade and small piece of Ara’s hair got slashed off.

“.....You didn’t attack seriously.”

“.....”

To think she’d risk her life to test him..... Ran tried to take a step back then frowned.

He couldn’t help but to ask.

“What use is there in me turning back into a human? Will anything change by doing that?”

“If Elder Brother wants to turn back into a human..... then we have to end this broken world first.”

So was she trying to convince him to help her fight against D? Ran smiled empty.

“Your words don’t make sense. D needs to be defeated for me to turn back into a human. But since D couldn’t be defeated, I accepted the fate of fighting against the El Search Party as a demon.”

“.....You’re mistaken, Elder Brother.”

Ara tone was slightly hesitant but she replied seriously. Ran shook his head bitterly.

“It wasn’t like I was glad to be imprisoned in this endless battle. I made over hundreds of attempts to escape but they were all for naught.....”

“There’s still one thing you haven’t tried.”

Ran unintentionally payed attention to Ara’s next words. Just what mistake did he make?

“You never asked me for help, Elder Brother.”

“Even with your help.....”

“I might seem weak to you, Elder Brother. But we, the El Search Party aren’t weak. See how we’re still fighting right now?”

Yes, Ara did fight on an equal level as him at least. And..... Ara was right.

Ran had never imagined even during his tens and hundreds of failures, the choice of revealing the circumstances to Ara and asking her for help.

Even back in Hamel, he only tried to detain Ara and never explained the exact circumstances to her.

Ara should be weak, she couldn’t even defeat him. Asking Ara for help would only increase the corpse count by one. And.....

“.....”

And since an older brother who begs his sister for help looked like the biggest idiot in the world.

Ran became completely frozen from the thought that flashed by his head. Part of his mind that he wasn’t conscious of had surfaced for a moment..... and although he felt reluctant about it, he sensed that this was the truth.

“You got to be kidding me.....”

Revealing everything to Ara and asking her for help was so lame..... so he never took that option into consideration.

Wasn't that useless since Ara was weaker than him? If that was the reason, then he should have changed his mind the moment Ara defeated him back in Hamel.

If not back then, he should have at least got slight hints about it when Ara was fighting equally against him just moments before. But he had never imagined the choice of borrowing Ara's strength.

Because of his pride as an older brother.

"Elder Brother?"

".....It's nothing."

Ran frowned as he placed his hand over his face. He felt so dumbstruck after realizing his own feelings.

Ran sighed after rubbing his eyes to ease the fatigue.

"Why do I have to listen to you?"

"What do you mean?"

"If I let D win like this, then I'll obtain the time I want. So why should I join you now?"

He wanted to listen to what answer his sister gave. Ara hesitated for a moment then slowly opened her mouth.

"No matter what happens, my feeling of wanting to turn Elder Brother back into a human won't ever change."

Was that all to her answer? Thankfully, Ara's words weren't over yet.

"My wish is to turn Elder Brother back into a human."

"That's your wish....."

"Yes, so I'll also grant Elder Brother's wish."

Ran became silent from Ara's conclusion. Ara spoke carefully, but resolutely.

"You'll grant my wish, Elder Brother. And I'll help you grant your wish."

"....."

"As Elder Brother knows very well already, Ara always keeps her promise."

Ara had a face filled with determination as she abruptly held out her hand. She was asking for a handshake. Ran was keeping silent while looking down at his sister's bare hand, then clicked his tongue.

She was his little sister..... but she's so hopeless.

"You must think that's a good answer..... But as I said, D will quickly clean up this situation. I have no reason to go with your offer that has a low chance of success. Why do I have to go out of my way to walk a difficult path?"

"Ah....."

Ara became flustered as if she didn't expect this response. Her strong and reliable demeanor instantly disappeared and she was struggling very hard to think of words to convince Ran.

She was his little sister..... but he had to admit she was cute.

"I thought you'd try to rely on bonds of siblings....."

Ara's face suddenly became surprised while she was attempting to think of additional words to convince Ran. Ran had lightly grabbed her hand then let go.

"That was good enough considering it's you. I'll let myself be tricked."

".....Huh?"

"As someone who was once part of the Haan family, I'll fight together with you this time."

Ara became overjoyed from Ran's acceptance that she opened her arms widely then hugged him. Ran didn't expect her to do something like this in the battlefield so he couldn't react in time and let himself be hugged.

"Thank you, Elder Brother Aren!!"

".....If you're going to convince someone next time, do it without any flaws. If there is a next time that is."

Ran didn't know how he should handle his sister hanging on to him like this so he just let her be.

"Ah, it was Mr.Add who told me I should convince you. He said there shouldn't have been a time when Elder Brother and I were truly on same sides."

"....."

Well, it was certainly unusual for Ara. Ran felt strange sense of displeasure from that name Ara called so familiarly but shook his head.

Ara's skills had already improved drastically to the point where she could match him equally. But it was only her spear skills that had improved. Her innocent and naïve personality was still the same.

And it was the older brother's job to cover for his little sister if she was somewhat lacking.

"Siblings....."

"Elder Brother?"

".....It's nothing."

It would be lame to say he recalled the memory of when he was a human. Ran collected his mind then raised his blade.

"I'll open a path. Don't fall behind."

"Yes, let's go together, Elder Brother!"

Siblings of the Haan family united their wills to fight together and end the Time War.

Words were over but actions didn't follow through. Helputt looked at the cannon aimed at his chest then let out a big sigh.

".....Why aren't you firing?"

Chung slowly withdrew his weapon instead of answering. Add's plan was to persuade Ran and Helputt to join their side. According to Add, Ran and Helputt were so deeply consumed by helplessness and despair that they had no choice but to take the Devil's side.

But Chung wasn't doing this because of Add's plan. For him, there was never a choice to finish off Helputt in the first place.

"Father... How could I ever shoot you?"

"....."

Chung spoke while looking up at his answerless father.

"Although father made a wrong choice..... that was to protect me who didn't know anything. Even if the time repeated infinitely, father would have never betrayed Hamel if it weren't for me."

"It's a choice I made on my own, Prince."

Chung shook his head after being called by his real name. Because he was weak, because he didn't know anything, he made his father fall into darkness.

“Father, please lend us your strength.”

“I said it already, but even with my help.....”

“It doesn’t matter. Help us still.”

Helputt was speechless from this unreasonable request. But Chung wasn’t saying this without reason.

“Father, you’re the Guardian of Hamel who’s been protecting Hamel with the will of steel. Even if one’s life were to end, at least never let your soul give in to darkness and evil. You should know very well that this the spirit of the Seiker Family.”

“But.....”

“I may get hurt or even killed while fighting together with my comrades. But I’ll accept this gladly. No, this probably happened many times already.”

Chung raised his head and requested confidently.

“Just like your fears, since we lost last time we might lose this time as well. And we might lose next time too. Even so, we’ll still fight for Hamel and for Elrios.”

“.....Prince.”

Helputt exclaimed after reading his son’s determination. No matter what happens, no matter how strong of an enemy he faces, his son will fight without fear.

Even if that meant risking death. No..... didn’t he already die once by D? He obtained another chance to fight because Add turned back time.

His son resolved to fight for justice.... Even beyond time and death.

Helputt sighed in regret from witnessing his son’s strong demeanor that he had never imagined.

“.....I was very wrong. I should have believed in you and fought together. I saw you too much as a child.”

“No father, I was immature and weak. I thought you have passed away and tried to act carelessly because of burning desire for revenge.”

Son consoled the father who was filled with self-blame and regret.

“After meeting the El Search Party and sharing time together with them, I learned to fight while seeing much more broadly. I now know what it means to fight together and what I should fight for.”

“Yes, I see..... I was wrong to have tried to separate you from the El Search Party and keep you tied down in Hamel.”

His son had already become a man before he knew it. He had grown up to be a man whom Helputt could stand together with on the battlefield as equals.

“You weren’t wrong father. I was too weak and was holding you back. But..... I won’t be a burden anymore.”

“.....”

Helputt only nodded at his son’s determination. His fatigued heart from the endlessly repeating time..... melted down instantly.

Maybe he had endured until now so he could hear these words.

What should the father do for his son who grew up so much to the point of surpassing him? Helputt already knew the answer.

Helputt slowly turned around as he shouted.

“Then let’s fight together, my son!”

“Yes, father!”

Father and son’s hearts united for the first time as they headed to battle.

It obviously became battle for control of range if bow and blade faced off against each other. Bow had the advantage at long range while blade had the advantage at close range.

But Rena and Raven’s fight didn’t proceed this way. Raven who should be closing the distance wasn’t moving.

Rena was about to aim her bow but then frowned.

“What are you thinking?”

“Shoot.”

“.....”

Was he planning to deflect her arrow with his blade? Of course, Rena knew that Raven’s skill with the blade was amazing. It was to the point where there were very few in Elrios that could match up to him. It wouldn’t be difficult for him to defend himself even from rain of arrows.

But if Raven is master of blades, then Rena is master sharpshooter. They knew each other’s skills very well because of the time they traveled and fought side by side.

Rena who had been staring at Raven’s face for a long time lowered her bow.

“So, you don’t care what happens.”

“.....”

“You’re just planning to stand your ground regardless if you can deflect my arrows or not.”

Rena sighed in anguish. She had sensed something was odd and she was right..... Raven had no intention to guard his life in the first place. Blocking Rena’s path right now was a symbol of his will that he’ll stop Rena no matter what..... It wasn’t because he was confident in his skills.

If Raven was thinking about fighting properly, then he would have tried to secure a safe distance first. Rena looked at Raven regrettably while letting out a sympathetic sigh.

He was basically saying shoot me first if you want to get past me..... but Rena just couldn’t bring herself to do it.

Rena might look like she was always gentle but she also possessed ability to make cold and level-headed decisions. If it was necessary, she wouldn’t hesitate to take the target down even if they were her acquaintances.

Since the El Search Party was in danger, she could do anything to assist them.

If the one blocking her path right now wasn’t Raven.

And if the method he was using to stop her..... wasn’t so much like him.

Raven stood silently. Rena who had been looking at him sympathetically asked slowly.

“Do I die?”

“.....”

Raven’s eyes shook very slightly. Rena became certain now from Raven’s wordless answer.

“So, there were times I died.”

Raven was hesitant if he should answer or not and he chose to keep silent in the end. But Rena had already understood everything.

“Inside this endlessly continuing battles..... I died countless times, right?”

“.....”

It wasn't that she remembered being killed clearly..... but there was no way she would have been unharmed if such dangerous battles occurred countlessly. Even if Rena's archery skills transcended common sense, their enemy was a devil who controlled time.

It was difficult enough for her to fight Dark Nephilim that D enhanced..... so result of a direct confrontation against D was obvious.

"So, that's why you're stopping me from joining that fight. To prevent me from dying."

".....That's right."

Raven gave up keeping quiet. Rena's face looked as if she was about to cry. Raven begged.

"Don't move."

"....."

"Just ignore it, only for a bit."

D will win after little longer then open the Space-Time Gate. The current development was strange but the El Search Party couldn't overturn the fundamental difference in strength.

But Rena didn't listen to Raven's plea. She looked hesitant, but slowly began to approach him.

Raven had numerous thoughts as Rena came closer.

What should he do? Suppress her with force? He had never done such a thing before. Technique to make her unconscious won't work anymore. But he couldn't let her get past him. He even thought about suggesting they should run away.....

As Raven became completely halted from not being able to choose any of those options, Rena stood right in front of him.

"Move, Raven."

"....."

"Even though we're standing still, time is still moving. No one can stop that."

Rena spoke with an anguished expression.

"Even if the result is someone's death."

"I....."

Raven gritted his teeth. He didn't want Rena knowing the truth in the first place. Rena would certainly act like this if she knew about truth of the Time War.

The reason Raven acted separately from the El Search Party in the first place was because he wasn't confident that he could continue to keep the truth from Rena.

Inside the time that kept repeating because of D, amongst 9 members of the El Search party, five that became aware of the truth were Eun, Aisha, Elesis, Raven..... and Rena.

Rena had originally known the truth of the Time War. But, she had forgotten until Add turned back time to resurrect her.

Make Rena forget everything.

That was the deal between D and Raven.

Raven shook his head as memories of the far past resurfaced. So many nauseating scenes rose up in his mind as various emotions whirled around within him.

Raven had no idea what he should do, or what he should say.

"Even so..... I don't want to see something like that again."

"....."

Raven's shaking voice. It was such a weak voice but this was honestly his true feelings. He was afraid of what face Rena might be making. So he continued his words with his eyes closed.

"I know this isn't right and that this is cowardly. But even so, I can't bear to....."

He couldn't bear to see Rena die anymore. This was Raven's one single wish during the Time War.

But..... he couldn't convey this feeling straightly. The feeling of not wanting to see someone important to you die was given for any people, but Raven couldn't help but to feel guilty about himself for his acts.

Because Rena looked strikingly similar to his beloved fiancé that he lost. They were so similar to the point where they could pass as same people.

"I....."

Seris was killed right in front of him and he couldn't do anything to stop her death. Raven was thoroughly broken by this fact and fell to the very bottom of the abyss as a result.

Until he met Rena who looked ever so like Seris.

He could make a new resolve and pull himself together because of the times he spent together with Rena. He could look at tomorrow instead of getting tied down by the brutal past.

But that Rena dies.

Under name of the Time War, D's dice rolls, El Search Party members were put through enormous suffering and Rena wasn't an exception. No, she suffered the most out of everyone because unlike Eun or Aisha, she chose to face D head-on.

Raven couldn't stand this anymore and got a promise out of D to not lay hands on Rena in exchange for his cooperation. Of course, there were times when Rena fell by someone other than D, but it was still much better than before.

“.....”

Yes, it was an understandable decision if you only looked at the cause and result.

A man who couldn't stand to watch someone important to him suffer anymore so he joined hands with the devil to erase his important person's memories.....

Maybe from view of a third-party, they might say his actions were understandable, that he didn't make a wrong choice..... but Raven who was directly involved couldn't dare to say he was right.

“Don't go any further than this.”

With his head still lowered, Raven slowly stretched his hand out. He could feel Rena's soft cheek then her round shoulder. He was afraid to confirm what face Rena had, what she was feeling as she saw him acting like this.

“It's my selfish request..... But I can't stand it anymore.”

“.....”

“I.....”

Did Raven really do this for Rena? Wasn't it just for his self-satisfaction?

He couldn't stop Seris' death.

The biggest, irrevocable regret in Raven's life.

So he at least wanted to protect Rena who looked similar to her no matter what..... could he really say to himself that he didn't have such thoughts?

Can he be sure that he wasn't equating Rena and Seris in his mind? That he wasn't projecting his feelings of regret as he pleased?

Raven asked himself countless times during those innumerable repetitions of time but couldn't find an answer in the end. But he was at least aware that he could never say that he made the right choice, that he had no shame in the path he decided to walk.

Yes, it was greedy, it was selfish. Equating Rena and Seris... projecting them in each other was..... such huge disrespect to them both.

He knew.

He knew down to his bones that this wasn't right.

But he didn't want Rena to die.

He wanted her to live.

Watching Rena smile brightly at him, towards the very person who made her unaware of the Time War, made him happy but feel guilty at the same time. If you looked back, the biggest reason he separated from the El Search Party was..... Because he couldn't face her smile directly.

Because it felt like her smile was reprimanding him for his sins, because he couldn't stand the sense of guilt that he was tainting her smile.

"Raven."

He heard Rena's voice coming from above his head. Raven didn't want to raise his head but Rena was waiting for him to. When Raven suppressed his fear and slowly raised his head..... he could see Rena's face.

Rena was smiling with a face as if she was on the verge of bursting out into tears.

"It's okay now."

"....."

"You don't have to overburden yourself anymore."

Rena conveyed quietly as if she was whispering.

“Raven, you’re an extremely righteous person. You’re not someone who would feel at ease doing something wrong.”

Tear trickled down along Rena’s cheek.

“If you were to do something wrong, it’s for someone else. It was for me.”

“But I.....”

He couldn’t say it was out of such pure intentions. But Rena slowly shook her head.

“I know, so you don’t have to say it.”

Rena continued to speak slowly, being cautious of each word she said.

“I know about what you lost, what you’re afraid of.”

“.....”

It wasn’t that Rena heard from Raven directly..... but she could tell from times they spent together that Raven was bound by regret from his past, and that he was being very careful so that his feelings of regret wouldn’t get conveyed to Rena.

“No, it would be too inconsiderate to say I know everything. I think two of us.....”

Rena forced herself to smile.

“Were too careful with each other.”

“.....”

Rena tried her best to make her voice sound light as possible.

“Isn’t it strange? You and I have been together for so long. Not only that, but time has repeated countless..... but there’s a wall between us. We never opened up to each other until now.”

“That’s.....”

“I know. You didn’t want to talk about what you lost and I avoided bringing it up out of respecting your choice. We were together but you were still in the past and I didn’t know what to do about it.”

Rena grabbed the Nasod hand on her shoulder then slowly brought it to her cheek. She sensed the cold steel on her face.

“So, we both ignored and didn’t touch upon that topic. I thought that was the right thing to do. But.....”

Rena had quite an hesitant expression but spoke her mind in the end.

“I shouldn’t have done that. If you were caught up in the past and was in pain because of it, then I should have brought you back to the present. Even if there might have been conflict in the process, and even if we might have misunderstood each other.....”

“.....”

“Since you wouldn’t have had to feel so much anguish for such a long time.”

Raven didn’t know what to do from the sense of his heart being struck..... then he managed to let out a sunken voice.

“It’s..... what I chose on my own.”

“And you wouldn’t have had to say something like this either.”

“.....”

There was no way to beat her with words. When Raven kept quiet, Rena slowly stroked the Nasod hand on her cheek.

“I didn’t want to break the wall between you and me. Because I thought that was respect. But it wasn’t respect, it was ignorance. I didn’t try to break it even while knowing you were in pain because of it.”

Rena forced herself to smile.

“In the end, I was afraid too. Afraid that I might hurt you.”

“.....”

Raven agreed wordlessly. His precious lover, Seris whom he couldn’t protect, and Rena who looked just like her..... Trying to look at them separately was extremely difficult..... so there was no choice but to keep some distance from Rena.

Rena spoke quietly as if understanding Raven’s feelings.

“But I’ll have to be brave from now on. I don’t want to leave you inside the wall suffering in pain. Even though this is rather reckless, I have to break the wall.”

“Rena.”

“You can stop sacrificing yourself for me now.”

Rena looked at Raven earnestly. Just like she said..... she was being brave.

Their relationship was where they cared for each other but felt more difficult about each other at the same time. Rena was now trying to break that wall.

“Instead of you one-sidedly protecting me..... I'd like you to fight together with me. I want you to stop being bound by the past and help open up the future together with me in this present.”

“If you'd like.....”

Dark shadow descended on Raven's face just when he was about to answer Rena's request. He recalled how brutal Rena's demises were in this despair filled Time War.

Rena spoke gently as if she noticed Raven's thoughts.

“We fought together before we joined the El Search Party. It's now time for us to fight together again.”

“.....”

“If our time has stopped, then let's fight together to get our time back. No matter how many times it takes.”

Rena's voice was small but the will contained inside it was indescribably powerful.

“While never giving up, even if you die, or I die, challenging once again next time.”

Hoping these words can comfort this man's heart.

“Always together.”

Was this how it felt for one's heart to be moved? Raven realized something that's been shackling him was disappearing.

It would be shameless to entrust everything to her gentleness and understanding nature..... but something was saying it was okay for him to do so.

It should have been like this from the start. This was the right path.

“I..... may not be able to protect you.”

“Then I'll protect you.”

Rena opened her arms and gently embraced Raven. Blade and Bow, their skills were equal but the strength of their minds were dimensions apart.

Beautiful Elf's sincere voice unlocked his worn-out heart.

“Thank you for protecting me until now, Raven. Now let's fight together. For each other.”



“I..... may not be able to protect you.”

“Then I’ll protect you.”

“.....”

Raven gave a long sigh. He never imagined Rena would make such a choice after knowing the truth..... He never thought she would ask him to fight together with her even if the battle ahead was only filled with despair.

Rena that Raven knew before would have first thought about how to exclude Raven from this fight, she wouldn't have asked him to fight together with her.

Just like she said it herself, she broke the wall and took one step closer towards him.

She was stopping distancing herself from Raven and asking him to be together with her till the end, no matter what danger or ending awaited.

And Raven couldn't refuse her.

“.....Because I wanted this too.”

Just like her request, it has been so long since Raven joined his strength with someone else to break through obstacles. Those were times he couldn't remember clearly..... but the feeling that it was ever so joyful remained intact inside him.

In this moment, Raven realized what he had really wanted during this Time War.

Stopping Rena's death was nothing more than an emergency measure. What he truly wanted was to end the Time War..... and fight shoulder to shoulder together with Rena again.

Rena gently held Raven's Nasod hand as she smiled.

“Let's go.”

“Yes.”

The man who had been being weighed down by his past realized his reason to fight in the present.

Victory or defeat will be determined by who falls first between Add and the Devil. Elsword instinctively realized this and rushed to face the Devil..... but there was an unexpected obstacle in his way.

“Energy Needles.”

Along with the Angel's emotionless declaration, countless electric spears flew towards Elsword. Elsword quickly raised his great sword to cover his body but each strike was heavy and difficult to withstand. Not only that, but spears had a homing feature and kept chasing after Elsword even if he dodged.

“Eve!! Stop this!!”

But the fact that was troubling Elsword the most was that the Angel blocking his path was Eve. Although this Eve from a different time, she wasn't someone Elsword could fight without reluctance. Eve was an important friend to Elsword after all.

Elsword begged while withstanding the electric spears battering his sword.

“Don't involve yourself in this fight!”

“Talking to her is useless.”

An empty voice rang in the air then Elsword's body suddenly became frozen. The Devil had activated Void Field to tie him down. Elsword couldn't even move his mouth due to the overwhelming pressure as if his body was getting crushed.

The Devil shrugged dejectedly after immobilizing Elsword.

“This isn't Eve you know. She's just a broken doll that stopped functioning properly after losing her emotion.”

“.....”

Elsword had many words he wanted to say to rebuke the Devil but his mouth didn't move. The Devil looked at the Angel with a gaze filled with indescribable emotion.

But the Angel only stared forwards whether she was being watched or not.

“It seems her only feature is to counterattack against those that are hostile to me..... So she never activated because I was never in danger?”

Condition for the Angel to reactivate was for D to come into danger.

By strange twist of fate, the condition had never been fulfilled because D was such a powerful existence. The Devil shook his head dejectedly.

“Yes, I was seriously insane after all..... All of that just to see this once again...”

The Devil smiled weakly as he stroked the Angel's cheek.

“Just to see this.....”

The Devil closed his eyes while sighing emptily.

The one single moment he longed to see all this time had finally arrived. But rather than being purely glad..... agony came first.

Agony that he wasn't satisfied with just this.

“Well, devil is never satisfied.....”

Becoming emotional about Eve reactivating only lasted for a short time. Disappointment that she was merely a doll without proper consciousness was greater. No, it wasn't that she didn't have any consciousness. She did have the ability to make decisions judging from how she counterattacked after witnessing Elsword's attack, then stopped her attack when Elsword was immobilized.

In the end, it was emotion that was missing. Heart that the Angel lost couldn't be recovered again.

“Then will you listen to my orders?”

“.....”

Her complete ignorance was such an Eve-like response that the Devil couldn't help but to laugh empty.

“Seriously, what am I doing.....”

The Devil who had been shaking his head narrowed his eyes then looked in front of him. His Void Field had disappeared. It wasn't that Elsword broke out on his own or that the Devil's power ran out. The Devil could keep the Void Field open for days if he wanted to.

Elesis pulled out the sword she had stabbed on the ground. Spilt blood dyed the ground red with each movement she made.

One couldn't recover normally if the Devil and Angel's attacks injured them since the two were existences separate from this time and space.

“You'll die if you push yourself further in that state.”

“I already died once.”

“.....Big Sis.”

Elsword who was now free thanks to Elesis spoke worriedly. Anyone could tell that Elesis was in a very bad condition.

But Elesis didn't complain and spoke while only looking at her foe.

“Look forward Elsword, our enemy is still in front of us.”

“But.....”

“Even if I die, even if anyone else dies, we have to defeat the Devil right now.”

Elesis spoke forcedly with a pale face.

“You must, if you really want to stop one person from selfishly changing everyone’s time like you believe.”

“.....”

Elesis’ decision couldn’t be changed. Elsword stared at Elesis very regrettably then finally turned his gaze forwards.

He determined that today might be the first and last time he will fight side by side with his sister as knights.

“You should know that you can’t win.”

The Devil made a tired sigh then closed his eyes. It was a gesture as if he couldn’t bear to watch any longer.

“I can feel the time that had been rewound returning to the present. I’ll regain my control over both time and space soon. And now.....”

The Devil momentarily pondered for choice of words while looking at the Angel beside him.

“I even have this doll to help me. Even if all of you came at us together, you can’t beat the two of us.”

“Eun isn’t here anymore.”

Elesis said this out of the blue then turned her gaze towards the Angel.

“And Eve is moving again.”

“.....What are you saying?”

“This is the last battle, D. There’s no need to hold back.”

The Devil’s face froze. Elesis had accurately caught how the Devil was reluctant about taking Elesis’ life again.

When the Devil didn’t answer, Elesis collected her breath then held her sword in battle stance.

“Then..... let’s finish this Elsword.”

“.....Yes.”

Last battle that the siblings fought together for the first time began.

Aisha lost her control over space and couldn't bring forth her possibilities anymore. Not only that, she couldn't even use her mana properly due to the side-effect of losing her power.

"But it's still more than enough to take care of you!"

Aisha fired spells repeatedly towards True Karis. True Karis was managing to block them with her scythe or dodging but she was feeling uneasy inside.

"Just how....."

Aisha was the Dimension Princess who used to be at almost equal level to D, but wasn't she weakened now? In contrast, Karis herself was granted more power by D. But facing Aisha was making Karis break a cold sweat.

Aisha spoke as True Karis caught her breath after barely dodging series of lightings, flames and blizzards.

"How long are you going to run away True Karis?"

"Hmph....."

True Karis scoffed. D's side was advantageous as more time passed so she didn't need to go all out. True Karis would contribute significantly to their victory by holding down Aisha who was one of the most powerful individuals in the El Search Party.

Although Aisha was still quite powerful after losing her control over space, it was still too much for her to assist with other fights while ignoring True Karis. True Karis was probably the strongest amongst the enemies minus the Devil and Angel so she had to be kept in check.

Aisha muttered in frustration from not being able to make any progress.

"How lame. Did you get the position of a general by just acting pretty?"

"Watch what you say....."

"But isn't it true? You seem to have gotten stronger so I tried to fight you for real but all you're doing is retreating. By the way, why did you change into such a vulgar outfit?"

True Karis couldn't ignore the insults being thrown at her anymore.

"What? Vulgar?"

"I think you heard me right, unless the definition of that word changed while you were running away. Ah, could it be that you lost so much clothing because you weren't confident in your face? I apologize if that's the case. I must have hurt your feelings."

"....."

How dare she! Karis scowled in rage. But Aisha's insults were only getting started.

"Come to think of it, you dyed your eyes black? My gosh, were you trying to copy D? Did you really think that was cool? That's totally not appropriate for a lady no matter how much fashion sense you lack. You could have at least asked me for advice."

"You, if you don't shut up....."

"Ah, sorry. Actually, I don't think it would have helped even if I gave you advices. Even Elsword should have more learning ability than some washed up demon granny."

".....Death Strike!!"

True Karis' boiling rage finally exploded as Death Strike flew across the room.

But Aisha smiled in satisfaction in that moment.

"How stupid..... Lightning Bolt!!"

Defending and attacking at the same time in a battle was very difficult. Death Strike was certainly a powerful attack, but it left that much of an opening in defense!

"Ah?!"

True Karis was shocked when Aisha didn't dodge and counterattacked. She attacked first because she was so enraged, but thinking about it now, wasn't her enemy the strongest magician in Elrios? No matter how much Karis powered up, was Aisha really an enemy she could attack so carelessly?

"Ugh!"

True Karis quickly opened her wings and tried to run away but the blue lightning piercing through the Death Strike and flying towards her was faster.

"Ahhhhhh!!"

True Karis shook while screaming in pain after getting hit directly by the lightning.

She landed a critical hit so it was all over. Aisha tried to turn away when she realized something was wrong.

Countless Death Strikes falling towards her did not disappear. They should normally disappear when the caster was defeated.....

".....Kuugggh!!"

True Karis had not been killed after getting hit directly by the lightning!! Smoke was coming off True Karis as she covered her body with her four wings. Her injuries were significant but she was still alive.

True Karis had indeed become stronger and Aisha had put that into account.... But Aisha didn't take the fact that she became weaker into her calculation!!

“Ugh!?”

Boom! Boom!! It was Aisha's turn to scream. There was no way for her to dodge the falling Death Strikes. Teleport was impossible in this throne room so she had to dodge with her own feet..... but magicians weren't known for being able to take hits.

And it wasn't just any attack, it was the strongest attack of True Karis after being powered up by D. Even Aisha was in danger if she were to get hit by this!

“Ahhhhh!”

Aisha tried to endure after being swept up by the explosions. Normal human would have died instantly, but she could at least hold out shortly by surrounding her body with mana.

But this had its limits so Aisha wasn't sure if she could hold out for more than a minute.

Aisha who had been holding out in the middle of storm of Death Strikes gripped her staff strongly. She'll die for sure if she kept defending like this, she had to do something.

Just when Aisha resolved herself to push herself to utmost limits and take down True Karis in an attempt stop the Death Strikes, unexpected interference happened.

“Atomic Shield!”

Eve had run in after realizing Aisha's danger and guarded her from the bombardment. But Atomic Shield wasn't invincible so it started to crack after five Death Strikes. It certainly didn't look like it will last long. Aisha who had been gathering mana spoke resolutely.

“I'll finish off True Karis. Take down the shield and escape quickly, Eve!”

“I refuse.”

Aisha stared in shock at Eve's pompous refusal. It was a situation where she was refusing to escape from a collapsing building. But Eve was level-headedly focusing on repairing the shield.

Even so.... the speed that the shield was cracking was faster.

“Eve, withdraw the shield and escape!”

“I said I refuse, Aisha.”

Eve declared sharply.

“I couldn't stop Ara from getting hurt before. I don't want to make the same mistake again.”

Eve's permission was needed to leave the Atomic Shield. But Aisha breaking the shield herself was a stupid choice as well. Aisha gathered more mana while trying to suppress her uneasiness.

The shield will certainly break, she had to take True Karis down in that final crucial moment. But as she gathered mana, she couldn't help but to ask.

"Why are you being so stubborn? Elsword will be sad if you die!"

"Then do you think Elsword wouldn't be sad if you were to die?"

".....What?"

Even while still gathering mana, Aisha was surprised by such non Eve-like response. Aisha hadn't interacted too much with Eve after separating with the El Search Party.

She couldn't even recall the last time she spoke with Eve.

Eun and Elesis had accepted their circumstances and focused only on defeating D..... but Aisha couldn't accept her situation so cleanly.

The reason for D claiming the title of King of Time and causing the Time War was because of his obsession with Eve.

It was all because Eve had lost her emotions.

Of course, the Angel wasn't at fault. She acted for the sake of the El Search Party and contributed even to the point of giving up her emotion circuit. Aisha knew this in her head..... but she couldn't stay so positive when this painful and lonely battle repeated hundreds... millions of times.

Aisha suddenly recalled she had been avoiding Eve because this kind of negative feeling of hers would get found out.

And when Aisha finally came face to face with Eve after all this time, she was being asked a question she never imagined.

"I don't know in detail but I know that you were our comrade as well. And.... the El Search Party never abandons their comrades."

"W-why did you mention Elsword then?!"

"You mentioned him first."

Aisha's face turned deep red at the obvious indication. As she turned her head away, cracked Atomic Shield that was on the verge of breaking came into her view. Moby was desperately repairing it, but it was already at its limits.

".....It won't hold out anymore."

"It's fine. We'll win."

Aisha became confused at Eve's words. Eve was a Nasod. She wouldn't say something without a basis.

But this shield will now break..... and the two of them wouldn't even last 10 seconds when that happens.

True Karis smiled triumphantly as she saw that the Atomic Shield was on the verge of breaking.

"Hahahaha...."

She had a huge advantage now. On second thought, Aisha didn't have particularly strong defenses either.

Her attacks were ridiculously strong but she was a magician in the end. She was a glass cannon.

Of course, True Karis' condition wasn't too good either. Electric current was still flowing in her body and her body temperature didn't show signs of dropping..... She might end up dead if she allowed one more hit from Aisha.

"That's why, I'll stomp you to death like this!"

It was obvious that Aisha was thinking the same thing inside that shield. This was a sudden death match where landing one more hit would decide the fight. Side that allowed themselves to get hit will die.

True Karis carefully continued the downpour of Death Strike. She would have preferred to be up and close to her enemy in a close quarters combat, but even the ever so proud True Karis knew that even a slightest error now could mean the end for her.

"Ahahaha!! Die! Die! Die!!"

True Karis could see the shield's protective radius decreasing down below. She smiled satisfyingly from the victory that was close at hand..... but then realized something was strange.

She saw that Atomic Shield before..... and the speed it was breaking from her Death Strike was faster than last time.

“.....Why?”

Of course, it must be because she became stronger from D's power. But it felt strange to determine that this was correct.

True Karis looked around the battlefield from feeling uneasy then saw something horrifying. Two men in full body armors were aiming their weapons directly at her.

“Wait a moment.....”

Rain of cannon fire flew towards True Karis even before she got to speak. True Karis quickly flew to dodge the cannonballs but she had to stop the Death Strike because of this.

“Help! you betrayed us?! Now? Are you insane?”

True Karis was too shocked to be even angry. D will open the Space-Time Gate soon so why would he betray them now?

But there was no time to chat.

“Haaaaaah!!”

Ara jumped up from behind True Karis and swung her spear. True Karis quickly waved her scythe to block but she got pushed back from force of the impact.

Crash!

True Karis plummeted to the ground but immediately forced herself to stand up. There was almost no one in the El Search Party that could fly so staying in the air was more advantageous for her. She'd get destroyed immediately if she stayed on the ground!

“I won't let you escape, Karis!”

But Ara closed in quickly and stabbed with her spear consecutively. True Karis had no choice but to give up flight and block immediately. Only positive thing for True Karis at this point was that others couldn't interfere because she was fighting too close to Ara.

Ara might get caught up if they attacked carelessly.

“.....Ahahahaha!”

In that case, let's give up on flight! True Karis changed her mind then closed in on Ara. Those idiots couldn't join in because they were afraid of hurting Ara. She had to make use of their softness!

“How dare you challenge me, weakling!!”

“Ah!”

Ara started to get pushed back when True Karis started her offense seriously. Ara could have handled normal Karis on equal grounds but True Karis was on a totally different level.

If you only counted physical might, True Karis was stronger than Ran! No, strongest amongst demons!! With each slash of True Karis' scythe, Ara's arm shivered and blood got split from the cuts she received.

"Ara, pull out!!"

Aisha shouted impatiently from noticing Ara's danger. Aisha was too specialized in magic that destroyed everything in a large area..... she couldn't do much to help if they were fighting that close together.

"You think I'll let you?! I'll win if I can just stall for time anyways!"

True Karis stuck close to Ara when she attempted to pull back. But Ara held her spear in short reach then twirled around to strike as if she had been waiting for True Karis to come close. True Karis became internally surprised from Ara's fierce counterattack as she pulled her body back to dodge.

".....Do you really think you can take me on by yourself?"

"Of course, Karis!"

True Karis mocked when Ara's fighting spirit didn't diminish even though she was obviously losing.

"You couldn't beat me when your home town was turned into a sea of blood..... So what's making you so confident now? Did you become even stupider since the last time I saw you?"

"She's confident because of this."

True Karis gasped from the voice that came from behind Ara then quickly stepped back. Giant shadow appeared and slashed at the spot she had been.

True Karis shouted with a face of disbelief.

"Ran! Even you?!"

"We'll take down Karis first, Ara."

Ran didn't respond and rushed in while mixing blade and shadow claw attacks. He was trying to not give True Karis any time to take flight. True Karis knew this too but she had no choice but to focus on defending because Ran's attacks were too fierce.

And Ara's spear was pushing in from the side. True Karis had to accept her losses and dodge, this came at the cost of her chest getting scratched widely by a shadow.

Karis shouted in despair as she was pushed into a corner.

“Ran!! Just why? Why are you betraying Lord D and me now?!”

“My objective was different from yours from the start.”

Ran answered stiffly then made a wide swing with his blade.

“Black Destiny!!”

Powerful wave of demonic energy rushed forwards. True Karis knew that it was all over if she was caught by this attack so she flew up immediately..... but she was struck by cannon fire from Chung and Helputt who had been waiting for the right timing.

“Ahhhh!!”

Due to the unusual combination of Ran, Helputt and Chung’s attacks, True Karis ended up getting caught by the Black Destiny. Terrifying demonic energy scratched and tore her apart.

But even through the pain of her body getting torn apart, True Karis gritted her teeth and waved her scythe.

“Don’t joke with me..... Know your place!! I’m the one who made you into a demon, Ran! How dare you betray me! I won’t forgive you! You cannot surpass me!”

“I was never thankful for it.”

Ran spoke coldly then blocked True Karis’ scythe. True Karis crazily waved her scythe. Only her desire to kill Ran remained now that her body was burnt and broken.

“Kugh.....”

No matter how strong Ran was, it was too much for him to block True Karis’ attacks especially when she wasn’t caring for her own safety anymore. True Karis made a lunatic smile from hearing Ran grunt in pain.

“I can’t die alone, not alone! You have to die too, Ran!”

“Haaaaah!!”

Ara rushed in to help her brother. True Karis sensed this distraction and waved her scythe with an enormous force.

“Ran’s sister! I’ll kill you too!”

While hearing True Karis’ malicious scream, numerous thoughts flashed by Ara’s mind as she ran in.

True Karis was powerful. Even Ran couldn't handle her alone. Not only that, she was burning out all her strength due to being at the verge of death right now. There was no way Ara could win by facing her directly.

But she couldn't dismiss her brother's crisis. She'll clash directly and win. Directly.....but how? How could she possibly beat such a powerful attack.....?

“Ah.....”

Ara suddenly exclaimed in revelation then threw herself towards True Karis' scythe while holding her spear up in a slant. True Karis was about to scoff from the act of willingly coming to die but then opened her eyes widely in surprise.

“Counter Switch!”

Ara shifted her spear's center of weight miraculously to make the scythe flow by to her side. It was a skill that made use of the principle that even the fiercest of attacks couldn't beat something soft.

“Ugh?!”

When her attack missed and Ara closed in, True Karis gritted her teeth as she waved her arm. Her claws could easily tear apart normal human beings, but Ara wasn't afraid in the slightest.

“Haaaaaaah!”

Ara waved her spear widely while flipping and dodging. Her movements were like a flower petal waving about in the wind, but one cannot snatch the falling flower petal with their hand!

Ara's spear flew about like an uncatchable flower petal then in a single flash, slashed across True Karis's chest.

“.....Kugh!”

Karis gasped in shock then looked down to see that she was cut in the same place that Ran had cut before. She was blinking in disbelief then stared blankly at the people that got in her way.

Aisha, Eve, Chung, Helputt, Ara and Ran were watching her demise.

“.....You're all hecklers till the end.”

True Karis fell after leaving a resentful remark.



Her movements were like a flower petal waving about in the wind,
but one cannot snatch the falling flower petal with their hand!

Elesis was dying.

Her wounds opened every time she moved and blood got spilt. But her head was becoming clearer in contrast.

“Condition perfect.... But I can’t head out.”

Elesis smiled bitterly then held her sword in short reach to get rid of the shock wave that was trying to tear her apart. The Devil scowled then fired more shockwaves. Elesis couldn’t move because she was busy nullifying those attacks.

The Devil asked boringly while attacking.

“Why are you only defending?”

The Devil will regain his control over space and time if Elesis only stalled..... her injuries were getting worse just by moving so she was basically killing herself by confronting him. But even though Elesis was continuing to fight by burning away her life, she didn’t show any signs of impatience.

Elesis spoke out of the blue after getting rid of three Void Impacts at once.

“Come to think of it D, you’ve never killed me before.”

“You have bad memories.”

It hasn’t been too long since the Devil executed Elesis for treason. But Elesis gave a vague smile in response.

“The way you talk now is strangely similar to Add.”

“.....”

The Devil swung his arm in a fit of bad mood and caused a shapeless shockwave around him. Elesis read the invisible attack by instinct and jumped back dodge lightly.

“.....What are you thinking?”

“That was a trap.”

It had been a perfect situation for Elesis to approach the Devil using her aerial jump attack from before..... but she merely jumped and dodged.

The Devil stopped attacking because he couldn’t understand.

“What are you planning, Elesis? Chances of you winning decreases the more you stall for time.”

The shockwave the Devil caused just now was an obvious trap, but it should have been a very enticing bait for Elesis. Elesis smiled beamingly then shook her head.

It was a gentle smile she rarely showed after turning her back on Elrios to become D's knight.

"My prince always pretends to be coldhearted but isn't."

".....I'm the King of Time. No, I'm the King of Time and Space now."

The Devil couldn't comprehend this situation even while exchanging conversations. Wouldn't one fight desperately if their life was going to end?

But Elesis was just passively defending.

Maybe she was hoping something from Elsword? But Elsword was facing the Angel's swift movements with his brute strength.

It was a tight battle, no abnormalities there.

"There's no one who can judge me. No..... maybe you're an exception."

The Devil cancelled his own words then frowned. Unlike Raven, Helputt and others that submitted due to despair and overwhelming power difference, Elesis had joined him because she understood his feelings.

Although they became enemies at the end, he couldn't deny that he treated her specially.

"And you? You're being unusual too, smiling like that. Wasn't it your way to cut first than think later once you held your sword?"

"It wasn't always like that before. Long before."

The knight who was on the verge of death and the Devil stopped fighting and exchanged conversations.

"Is it because I'm about to die? I remember the old times."

Elesis smiled bitterly.

"Very long ago, when Eve still had emotions."

"....."

"Everyone said it wasn't your fault but you didn't listen. And that's why things turned out like this."

She wasn't blaming or scolding the Devil. She didn't have the right since she didn't do anything and merely watched Add turn into D.

“Although this might sound bland..... I know how you feel.”

“Stop already if all you’re going to do is talk about the past.”

Even while answering coldly, the Devil’s gaze was chasing the Angel who was fiercely pressuring Elsword. The Devil seemed to be trying to seek something from her face, but shook his head in the end.

“I’m done talking about the past.”

“Then shall we talk about the now?”

Blood that trickled down Elesis’ legs was making a pool of blood on the ground but her voice was same as always. No, it was much brighter than usual.

The Devil frowned from this abnormality but listened to her quietly. He had nothing to lose anyways and also.....

“You can’t be coldhearted in the end, D.”

“Is that a compliment? or.....”

“I’m saying you’re too soft.”

Elesis looked at the Devil sympathetically. She didn’t look like someone who was dying.

“You became incomparably stronger after conquering time..... but at the same time ended up becoming separated from space-time and became unable to properly influence the current time. Not only that, but there was never a time when you were in proper danger amongst those countless repeating battles.”

“.....”

“After you became the Prince of Time, you were never in real danger.”

Just like Elesis said, today was the first time the Dimension Distortion Barriers surrounding the Devil had broken. The Devil placed his hand on his forehead then glared at Elesis who seemed to be speaking randomly.

“Are you trying to buy time with idle chatter.....”

“.....”

The Devil’s face froze when Elesis kept smiling bitterly. That’s right, something was strange.

Elesis was..... stalling for time.

She didn't come to attack him and only defended. Then she was bringing up old stories to keep the Devil occupied.

That was her goal.

"See? You're not coldhearted at all. Just because I'm not attacking first even though I'm dying, you're not going out of your way to finish me off. You didn't want to finish me off if you didn't have to, am I right? You were reluctant about it. Since, like you just said, you'll win if you waited just a bit longer. You don't want to kill me for the second time."

It was just like she said. The Devil determined that Elesis was critically wounded and wasn't a threat. That's why he didn't put serious effort to end her life.

The Devil's gaze headed towards Elesis' blood drenched clothes.

"You, could it be....."

Although there was no way to recover properly from injuries received from the Devil and Angel, that bleeding was still unnatural. It wouldn't be that bad if she at least covered up the wounds with bandages.

The Devil's eyes shook after realizing everything.

Elesis was..... stalling for time by even consuming her own life! Even showing all that blood loss was a ruse to shake the Devil's heart.

"What are you aiming for.....?"

"There's only one thing that someone who throws themselves into a fight wants."

Elesis withdrew her smile then replied coldly.

"It's victory."

"Freezing Arrow!!"

In that moment, arrow glowing with blue light came flying aiming for the Devil's back. The Devil became surprised but quickly dodged.

Dimension Distortion Barrier was gone now, he couldn't allow himself to get hit!

"Haaaah!!"

But Raven's blade flew in aiming for his face as if it had been waiting for him to dodge the arrow. The Devil quickly fired a Void Impact to counter but Raven didn't defend and thrust with his blade.

"What?!"

Normal people would defend if they were going to be attacked. But Raven was waving his blade disregarding his own safety.

D became impatient and quickly tried to dodge the blade with Reverse Circle, but then turned his head around to see.....

“Ejection.....!”

Elesis was gathering huge amount of demonic energy in her sword. This was a three-pronged attack, was Elesis stalling for time in order to launch this cooperative attack with Raven and Rena?

It was dangerous, should he dodge?

“.....Don’t make me laugh!!”

Even though he became startled by the unexpected situation, he was the King of Time, no the King of Time and Space!

The Devil read the trajectory of Raven’s blade and temporarily opened a Dimension Distortion Barrier in that location. It shouldn’t hold Raven’s blade for long but it still bought him a small time.

“Buste.....”

“How dare you pull this cheap trick!”

The Devil urgently used the shockwave of his voice to throw Elesis away. Voice is a wave that gets transferred through space, the Devil’s control over time was so transcendental that he could perform this kind of abnormality to space.

Elesis got pushed back far and Ejection Buster got cancelled.

Immediately, the Devil didn’t even aim properly and fired an Energy Bomb towards Rena. He could hear Rena who had been trying to fire her next arrow quickly dodge to the side. After taking care of two people, the Devil threw a kick towards Raven who was about to launch a blade thrust again.

Raven hadn’t expected D to respond with physical combat, but he still calmly blocked the kick with his Nasod Arm. But the Devil used that to his advantage and jumped into the air by stepping on the Nasod Arm then opened a dimension gate above him.

Quadruple Stardust Shower, no one could withstand these wide barrage of gravity orbs.

“Who do you think I am!!?”

“.....Black Density!”

Purple demonic energy swept over the dimension gate that was about to open then forced it to close. Even though the Devil was at a loss for words from his Stardust Shower becoming cancelled, he

understood what had just occurred. Those that were once El Search Party or demon generals could nullify Add and D's shockwave and space related attacks.

They could because the Devil taught them how to.

To play the dice game, demons should be able to defend against Add's attacks up to certain extent. He had to grant them at least that much power to prevent them from getting defeated one-sidedly by Add.

"How dare you....."

He basically strangled his own neck by teaching them. The Devil stood on his Dynamos in midair then turned his enraged gaze towards Ran.

"Challenging me when you know the difference between our strengths? Are you insane?!"

"....."

Ran didn't reply and grabbed his blade tightly. Even though he knew how to nullify D's attacks, he wasn't a match for D in terms of sheer amounts.

The Devil fired 10 consecutive Void Breakers to shatter Ran's entire body. It was an attack one could see coming but was impossible to block due to not having enough hands.

"Hmph!!"

But Helputt ran in and waved his cannon to destroy some of the Void Breakers aimed at Ran. Ran also waved his blade so all 10 Void Breakers got nullified.

But that just enraged the Devil even more. He had been going easy on them but now they were trying crawl up too far.

"If 10 is not enough, then I'll fire 100....."

"Haaaah!!"

But then, Ara jumped up with a clear shout. The Devil was flying 7 meters high in the air, it wasn't a height Ara could reach normally even if she knew windwalk technique. She had jumped up beyond her limit by stepping on Chung's cannon.

Ara's spear drew an arc as it smashed down on the Devil's head. The Devil opened up a temporary Dimension Distortion Barrier just like he did with Raven's attack.....

"Falling Dragon!!"

"Kugh?!"

But his body plummeted to the ground! The energy Ara emitted had transferred the shock across the barrier. There was no direct damage to his body, but he couldn't stop himself from falling to the ground.

“Kuuagh!!”

The Devil shouted in pain after gracelessly falling to the ground. The shock from the fact that he got completely toyed around by the continuous attacks, and that his plan of purging them all leisurely from the air was foiled, made him unable to stand up for a moment.

“Kugh!!”

But staying down only meant death. The Devil urged himself to stand up but found that the attacks against him had unexpectedly stopped. The Devil pulled his body up while feeling confused then realized the reason.

The Angel who had been fighting Elsword had come back and was standing between him and his enemies.

“.....”

The Devil's face as he looked at the Angel's back suddenly turned into an agonized scowl. The Devil walked up to the Angel then grabbed her shoulder. He tried to pull her behind his back..... but failed.

She was heavy because she was a Nasod, and couldn't be moved with his physical strength.

“Stop doing something stupid and stay back.”

Of course, the Angel didn't even pretend to listen. She didn't listen even though she had the ability to communicate and make decisions.

The Devil was frowning when a bold voice was heard from in front of him.

“.....Surrender, Big Brother.”

Everyone, with Elsword standing at the front were aiming their weapons against him. Elsword, Aisha, Rena, Raven, Eve, Chung, Ara, Elesis and even Ran and Helputt.

Everyone was his enemy now.

“Karis is dead..... and the rest betrayed? No one listens even though I'm granting them the time they want.”

No one answered and only enflamed their wills to fight. Was Elesis' plan stalling for time so they could create a moment where everyone could launch a combination attack?

The Devil looked bitterly at Elesis for a moment then slowly folded his hands into fists.

“Surrender? Why would I ever surrender? I’ll completely conquer space and time soon. You’re the ones who are at a disadvantage by wasting time with idle chatter! Just come at me, you idiots!”

6 space-time orbs formed around the Devil’s body as he hollered in anger.

“Maximum Strike!”

It didn’t matter if he was alone, he’ll destroy them all! But then..... even though he didn’t expect her to, the Angel standing beside him moved as well.

“Thousand Star.”

Light and Darkness gathered and emitted such a powerful pressure that it increased the tension amongst enemies of the Devil and Angel.

An empty laugh broke that tense silence.

“Kukukukuk, Kahahahahaha!!!”

The Devil shook with laughter.

A knight he trusted more than anyone else and the subordinates he persuaded all betrayed him.

Even someone who understood his feelings, and everyone else, they didn’t follow him to the end even though he promised he’ll grant them everything they wanted.

He was now suited to be called a god but there was no one left beside him.

He only had one person left, and that was the Angel who remained by his side even though she lost her emotions because of his stupidity. She was only a residue of what he truly wanted..... but she was such a suiting partner for him who had fallen into despair and ruin.

The Devil who had been laughing frantically for a while stopped laughing at once then declared coldly. This time, with a serious intent to kill.

“Fine! I’ll destroy everything! I’ll destroy everything and build it all over again!!”

“Everyone, let’s go!!”

The Devil declared and Elsword shouted in response. It was finally time for everything to end.

3. End of Time and Space

The Devil fired Maximum Strike projectiles in sequence as his enemies approached. The Angel followed suit and started to fire shining shock orbs.

“Blizzard Shower!”

Getting grazed by even one of their attacks would be fatal. Aisha responded quickly by conjuring a wide area ice storm but this wasn’t enough to cancel out all of the Devil and Angel’s attacks.

“Ejection..... Buster!”

“Haaaah!!”

Elesis used demonic energy blast and Chung used his shout to deflect the shock orbs. Ran used his shadow clones and Ara precisely waved her spear to slash apart the shock orbs.

Everyone was giving their all to defeat the Devil and Angel. This was the last moments of the Time War but the Devil wasn’t distressed in the slightest despite everyone he knew having turned against him.

“Assault Spear!”

He didn’t hesitate anymore even though Eve launched a Nasod spear towards him. That Eve wasn’t in the form he wanted anyways. And.....

“Giga Stream!”

The Eve he knew was fighting by his side right now!

Although she cannot regain her old self because she lost her emotions, this Eve was still the only one who was standing by his side till the end!

“Kukukuk! Kahahaha! Try stopping this, fools!!”

The Devil laughed loudly as he opened a dimension gate above in the sky. Everyone recognized the incoming Stardust Shower and tried to respond quickly, but the Devil’s abilities didn’t end here.

“Moonlight Rhapsody!!”

“Block it!!”

Elesis screamed urgently and Helputt quickly waved his cannon to block. But Helputt could only manage to lessen the shockwave and couldn’t stop the Devil’s attack completely.

“Kugh!”

“Agh!!”

Everyone received a significant damage. They would have been killed instantly if it weren't for Helputt becoming a wall for them.

But Helputt was now exposed to continuing attacks because he shielded everyone else. He will get killed like this!

“Father, back out!”

Chung knew this and bravely charged towards the Devil. Although Chung excelled at close quarter combat, he has been fighting by supporting everyone from the back. This was because while Chung could fight at close range, the weight of his armor and weapon decreased his dexterity. If he fought at close range, he could get in the way of other party members like Elsword and Ara.

That's why he had refrained from fighting close up..... but he needed to get close right now to get the Devil's attention!

The Devil was trying to finish off Helputt but fired a light shockwave towards Chung as he approached. Triangular projectiles the Angel fired also struck Chung. Chung wasn't injured thanks to the berserk mode's armor, but he couldn't stop himself from getting thrown backwards.

“Haaaah!!”

But the Devil and Angel didn't get any moment to catch their breaths because Rena started to bombard them with arrows. The Devil could stay safe using the Dimension Distortion Barrier.... But the Angel couldn't. And the Devil didn't have any ability to generate barriers for someone else.

No, he could technically, but it didn't serve much purpose against the ferocious offensive of their enemies.

“Kugh!”

The Devil personally shielded the Angel from the rain of arrows. But this restricted his movements and created a perfect chance for Elsword to strike! Elsword bravely ran in towards the Devil. Although the El Search Party had the advantage in numbers..... the Devil's power was limitless and he still wasn't showing his full power.

The El Search Party had to finish this fight quickly in order to win!

“Haaaaah!!”

Elsword jumped up lightly and spun in midair as he launched his attack. Ara was also rushing in to attack from the ground. If the Devil tried to block Elsword, he'll get killed by Ara, and he couldn't open up more Dimension Distortion Barriers because he was already blocking Rena's arrows.

Even if he opened up more barriers, it wouldn't withstand their enemy's consecutive attacks.

But the Angel, almost as if she read the Devil's thoughts, fired a beam attack that swept across top and bottom. Elsword quickly raised his sword to block but got thrown back from the impact.

"Great!!"

Although the Angel didn't converse, she had the ability to judge battlefield situation! The Devil unknowingly laughed joyously as he opened a Void Field against Ara. Ara quickly stabbed her spear on the ground to nullify the Void Field, but she got thrown back from the continuing shockwave.

"You guys can't win no matter how much you try!"

The Devil laughed loudly then started firing continuous shockwaves, energy bomb, space distortions and Void Impact. His enemies had their hands full with protecting themselves.

None of them were critically injured yet but they were starting to receive more small and big injuries.

"Atomic....."

They'll get annihilated like this. Eve determined that they needed to reorganize their formation and tried to open an Atomic Shield, but the Devil turning to face Eve was much faster.

"It's useless!!"

Atomic Shield shattered instantly along with the Devil's shout. Atomic Shield had withstood even True Karis' Death Strike, but it couldn't withstand the Devil's double Void Impact.

The Devil tried to fire a third Void Impact towards Eve as she was staggering from having her Atomic Shield destroyed, but a hesitation flashed by his face for an instant.

"....."

He already did this countless times already. He'll do anything for the result he wanted, to get back the Eve he wants!

Even if he had to destroy this current Eve!!

"Eve!!"

Elsword screamed as Eve was exposed to the Devil's unreasonably powerful barrage of attacks. That annoying voice..... the Devil was instinctively trying to fire a Void Impact towards Elsword as well, but then a chill suddenly went down his spine.

Strange.

Something was strange.

This was strange.

“Why only Elsword.....”

The Devil spoke to himself. During this final offensive..... someone who should be here was missing.

Where is Add?

“.....”

Did Elesis really plan this final offensive?

The Devil’s gaze headed towards Moby who was floating around Eve. Didn’t Eve normally have two Nasod gears.....?

“It can’t be.....!”

The Devil realized everything in an instant and turned his gaze immediately. Add who had been hiding until now had jumped out and was dashing in from the back.

His target wasn’t the Devil, he was heading towards the Angel.

“Don’t joke with me!”

As if he’ll let her be destroyed here!

The Devil screamed as he fired shockwaves towards Add, but all his attacks got deflected by Dimension Distortion Barriers.

“What!?”

The Devil was Prince of Time so he could keep 10 distortion barriers around him and move around freely. But wasn’t opening just one barrier while standing still the limit for Add? Although the Devil was terrified from the scene he just witnessed, he had to admit this reality.

Add’s ability after consuming the Memory of Time and Space.... Was catching up to the Devil’s! Add had been staying hidden until now so he could come up with necessary formulas that will enable him to move with the Dimension Distortion Barrier open!

All for this one strike!!

“I told you not to joke with me!”

The Devil howled impulsively then shot Void Impact and Void Breaker towards Add. But Add calmly adjusted his flight course to dodge the Impact then deflected the Breaker. Then Add prepared to launch a Void Impact that will end everything.

Then he'll just launch his own Void Impact to cancel Add's out. The Devil thought this, but then realized that this was impossible. Why would Add who had zero close quarter combat abilities be dashing in close?

He was trying to fire a Void Impact at zero range by touching the Angel directly!

Add now had the ability to look into the future. He had already seen how the Devil would react and planned his move accordingly.

"Dodg-....."

There was no time to stop Add now. The Devil was about to shout to the Angel to dodge then paused. The Angel who had turned to see Add approach her wasn't doing anything and was just standing still.

She didn't defend at all even though an attacker coming to finish her off was coming towards her.

"Void..... Impact!!"

Add forced his injured body.....to launch his final Void Impact. Then he slowly confirmed the situation in front of him with his hand still stretched forwards.

Add's real target had jumped in to intervene before his attack reached the Angel. It was just as he predicted.

".....Kaagh!"

The Devil grunted as he coughed out blood from getting his chest pierced directly. The Devil's blood was red just like any other humans.

The Devil looked down at his chest as if he couldn't believe that an attack had just pierced through his chest. Then he glared at Add in front of him with even more disbelief.

"Are you insa....."

"It was a bait."

The Devil understood everything from Add's short reply. The Devil will definitely react if Add attacked the Angel. Add had calculated this and attacked the Angel on purpose.

The Devil slowly sneered while his body was still shocked from getting pierced.

"What were you going to do.... If I didn't block?"



“There’s no way you wouldn’t have.”

Add replied bitterly.

“If you are me, if you are my possibility, then you’ll never ignore this.”

“.....Kukukukuk.”

Dark red blood dripped down the Devil’s mouth each time he spoke.

The Devil’s circumstance was similar to Aisha’s in the end. His attack power was limitlessly powerful, but his defense was weak. He was normally surrounded by powerful defense mechanism called the Dimension Distortion Barriers, but the body inside those barriers was no more than a normal human.

No, even less than a normal human. Add knew this better than anyone else.

That’s why he formulated this reckless plan to get everyone else to keep the Devil occupied, while he aimed for the Angel to create an opening in the Devil’s defense.....then fire off the finishing blow.

This plan could only be carried out because himself was his enemy, because he knew about this enemy better than anyone else.

“So..... what are going to do after killing me? No, killing doesn’t suit here. Since I wasn’t even alive in the first place.”

The Devil mocked even while grunting in pain from his lethal wound. He wasn’t just mocking himself, he was mocking everyone here including his past that defeated him.

“Same events will be repeated even after I’m gone. You’ll become D next. You might know me better than anyone else, but I know you better than anyone else too. You will never give up.”

“.....”

“Can you give up returning to the past just so you can protect this broken present?”

The Devil yelled angrily.

“The desire you’ve been harboring until now..... was it something that will just disappear by suppressing it? Will you give up on changing the past?”

“.....”

“I’m asking if you are going to let mother die! You imbecile!!”

Add slowly responded to the Devil’s roar.

“I promised.”

“.....”

“That I won’t become a devil no matter what. I promised that damned fox. No matter what happens, no matter how painful it might be...”

The Devil looked at Add despondently then shook his head.

“I don’t want to listen to foolishness anymore. End it.”

“Void.....”

The Devil was certainly dying but this wasn’t completely over yet. Add gathered his remaining strength to finish this. Add himself was dying so he had to end this fast.

But in that moment, the Angel moved to stand in between Add and the Devil.

“.....”

Add unknowingly stopped the attack formula in his head. The Devil also made a surprised face then frowned.

The Angel didn’t distinguish Add and the Devil. That’s why she didn’t do anything to defend herself when Add was coming to attack her.

The Devil sighed.

“So first priority is my safety..... and her own safety comes second. That’s why she didn’t defend herself from your attack. If she considers both of us as same entities..... then she probably couldn’t counterattack.”

While speaking, the Devil’s knees seemed to bend then he collapsed. Inside of his chest was destroyed so he did rather well to keep standing during the conversation now.

“Dammit..... I was so close.....”

The Devil sighed while lying on the ground. Just like Elesis said, he deserved to be called soft. It was true that he had been too overconfident..... But his gravest error was letting his heart become weak and becoming reluctant to kill. This was all because opening of the Space-Time Gate came ever so close.

He tried to use his full power at the end to erase them all, but even that failed in the stupidest way possible.

“It was against me but this is seriously stupid. I lost in such a stupid way.”

The Devil looked up at the ceiling and sighed deplorably while lying on the floor. Defeating them wouldn't have been difficult normally. The Devil would have certainly won if he fought alone.

He would have won if he fought alone, but he lost because he fought together with someone else.

“I was seriously stupid.....”

Why does it matter if the Angel, Eve's remains, was destroyed? He'll get to see Eve again if the space-time was restructured anyways.

He would have been able to see the real Eve, whom he longed for all this time, once again.....

Add, and Eve who approached looked down at the Devil lamenting. The Devil frowned when his own face and the face he had longed for looked down at him.

“Get lost, idiots. Is it your first time seeing a devil die?”

“I'm sorry, Add.”

The Devil closed his eyes and ignored Eve's apology. Even though he was dying, listening to her voice saying something like that was difficult to bear.

He needed to die with the regret and grudge of not achieving his goal. He couldn't forgive himself for failing because he couldn't stay coldhearted till the end.

He had to meet his demise with the despair and regret of his failure. That was a fitting end for a boy who disturbed the entire universe by causing the Time War.

The Devil was waiting for his death, not for his existence to fade away when he sensed that more people were gathering around him then became extremely displeased. Everyone must have gathered to watch him die.

It would be easier for him if they mocked and cursed him..... but there was no way they that would. The Devil swore to himself that he will never open his eyes.

“.....”

But he couldn't help but to open his eyes when someone raised his upper body. The Devil realized he was lying on someone's lap and he also knew who it was.

The Angel who haven't said anything since reactivating had just laid his head on top of her lap and was looking down at him.

“What is this.....”

“.....”

The Angel still didn't say anything. The Devil who was facing those emotionless golden eyes suddenly couldn't stand looking at her anymore and turned his gaze away. Then immediately regretted doing so.

Elsword, Aisha, Rena, Raven, Eve, Chung, Elesis, Ara and Add..... they were all looking down at him with pained expressions. They weren't gazes of watching demise of an enemy they defeated after fighting with everything on the line. Even Ran and Helputt had the same air around them.

"Kukukuk, idiots. Why aren't you happy? You finally won."

"I'm Sorry, Big Brother Add."

Starting with Elsword's words, everyone opened their mouth to say their farewells.

"Goodbye, Prince of Time....."

"Rest now, Add."

"It's done now."

After Raven spoke, Eve hesitated for a moment then grabbed Add's hand tightly as she said her farewell.

"You can rest now."

"The fight is over."

After Chung spoke, Elesis shook her head with a fond gaze.

"It's over."

"I'm sorry, Mr.Add....."

The Devil couldn't stand it anymore and averted his gaze when Ara spoke with tears welling up in her eyes. But because he did this, his gaze met with his past, with Add.

Add who had been surprised from Eve grabbing his hand so tightly looked at the Devil and declared.

"I.... will be different from you."

"If you can be satisfied with that....."

The Devil coughed then gave an empty smile. Add will become like him too if he can't be satisfied. When that happens, will he fall by the hands of his old comrades like this too?

The Devil stopped thinking about this possibility. It didn't have anything to do with him anymore. His consciousness seemed to be becoming lighter and his vision was getting blurry.

Everything will be over now.

“I was.....”

Prince wasn't suited for a Queen, he had to be a King.

He hadn't revealed this thought to anyone. The Devil's voice became quieter in middle of his words. Did he really have the right to proclaim himself as King? When he couldn't achieve his goal and is meeting his demise like this?

The Devil who was sighing in self-blame became frozen from sensing a movement he never imagined. The Angel had moved her hand to slowly caress his head.

The Devil's face turned blank from the soft touch that seemed to be consoling a child. He searched for a way to refuse and retort to this act..... but chose not to in the end.

Although he couldn't achieve his goal during this long fight.....

“The King of Time.....”

He should have been someone suited for a Queen.



The Devil's eyes closed and didn't open again. Amidst the silence where no one was opening their mouths, the Angel who was left alone slowly closed her eyes as well.

"System Terminated."

"Ah....."

Add unknowingly tried to stop the Angel but she stared at him for a short moment then very slightly shook her head. Add didn't know if she actually moved or if his eyes were mistaken..... but it was already after the Angel had stopped functioning.

The scene of motionless Devil, and the Angel with her hand laid on the Devil's head.....slowly faded away. They blew away into dust as if a painting was being erased.

Add who had been looking at the two disappear bit his lips tightly in frustration.

"Add."

".....It's nothing."

He knew that this other Eve was separated from time, that she wasn't Eve. But it was difficult to conclude as such. She did lose her emotions, but seeing how she acted..... you couldn't definitively deny that she wasn't Eve.

Add was letting out an agonized sigh but the sense of Eve's grip forced himself to focus on the matter at hand.

Eve he knew, and should protect was right beside him.

"Then....."

Add slowly opened his mouth. The Devil was finally defeated and the Time War has ended. But everyone's expressions weren't too bright. Finally, the Time War that was repeated so many times has ended..... but what's going to happen now?

Add made his conclusion.

"We'll open the Space-Time Gate now."

"What?!"

Wasn't the purpose of this long Time War to prevent the Devil from opening the Space-Time Gate? So just what kind of nonsense was Add saying?

Aisha screamed in shock but Add had already made up his mind.

"I was going to do this from the start. Defeat the Devil and open the Space-Time gate myself."

“Wait, are you craz...-“

Elsword spoke while halting Aisha who was about to become enraged.

“What are you thinking, Big Brother Add?”

“I don’t know about all of you..... but I cannot be satisfied with this time. I’ll never be.”

Elesis who was pale from too much blood loss asked in a quiet voice.

“Then what are you trying to do?”

“I’ll go through the Space-Time Gate and restructure the space-time. Of course, then you’ll say that I’m no different from D.”

Aisha who had been glaring spoke sharply.

“Then you’re not?”

“I’m different..... what I’m trying to do is returning everything to how it should be. I’ll return this universe that D..... I... broke to how it should originally be.”

Add made a fake cough as he explained his reason.

“In the first place, this space-time we’re in right now isn’t in its natural state. It was changed to suit D’s desires. So I’ll turn it all back to its original state.

“Then there’s only one problem.”

Rena pointed out calmly.

“Can we trust that Add will really do as he says?”

“.....”

Add couldn’t answer right away to this obvious indication. Beyond the Space-Time Gate that the Devil had longed to open so much, there was a power to change the universe as however one wanted. Add worked so hard until now so he could change the past, so will this really end with Add merely turning the universe back to normal?

Elesis cut straight to the point.

“Add..... will you be able to not fix the past..... of losing your mother?”

“That’s.....”

Add clenched his fist tightly to the point of his hands breaking. Regardless of what he’ll actually do, he had to say that he won’t change the past right now.

They'll only let him open the Space-Time Gate if they trusted him.

"I know it's hard for all of you to trust me. But this is....."

Add's body was in tatters as well. He might look well off on the surface but his body was broken on the inside due to swallowing the Memory of Time and Space. It wouldn't be strange for him to drop dead at any moment so he had to persuade them saying that there wasn't much time left.

"....."

That was his logical thought process..... but there was a strong reluctance about going through with this. He couldn't even imagine himself uttering the words that he'll ignore his mother's death.

As Add stayed silent from being unable to answer, an unexpected voice was heard.

"I agree with Add."

"....."

Add became surprised from this unexpected agreement and looked around. Eve who was still holding his hand spoke clearly.

"You said it yourself that you're different from D. I'll believe you."

"No, that was....."

Thinking reasonably, who wouldn't pass up on a chance of changing the past where one's family was killed? Maybe she can't comprehend this because she's a Nasod?

Add hesitantly tried to explain the matter to Eve but was blocked by her continuing words.

"I know that there were countless events that led up to you being here. I believe that you won't let those times go to waste."

"....."

"I also agree. I believe you, Mr.Add"

Ara smiled softly as she agreed. Then Aisha gave a discomfoting sigh.

"Sorry, but I can't trust Add so easily like you two. Can you prove objectively that that there's a definitive difference between Add and D? Where's the guarantee that there won't be another Time War?"

"Come to think of it, I have something I want to ask....."

Add confirmed his curiosity instead of trying to persuade.

“Just why did I become D? No, I know the reason already..... but why didn’t I fix the past beforehand?”

“You got it reversed. You became unable to change the past soon as you became D.”

Aisha spoke coldly.

“There was a limit to duration of time that D could exert his power. To be concise, D’s power was limited up to the point when the El Search Party was formed. D was certainly extremely powerful but that power was only because he became an outsider separated from time.”

“.....”

In a cruel turn of fate, he became D to change time but became unable to change the time he actually wanted.

And he could only exist in the same time as Add because he was a special existence separate from time.

“But beyond the Space-Time Gate, even D who became separated from time could have changed the universe from its very origins. But to do this, he had to defeat me..... and as you already know I avoided fighting him directly much as possible. That’s why D kept endlessly repeating time within his limited time range while tweaking various conditions, trying to get the result he wanted.”

“.....I see.”

So, Add could also change the past however he wanted if he went through the Space-Time Gate. Aisha must have read Add’s thoughts because she spoke coldly.

“That’s a futile thought. Time isn’t that simple. It’s actually one of the unexplainable basic laws of the universe. No matter how strong of a punch you have, it cannot split an atom, right? This is the same.”

Aisha spoke sternly then glared at Add.

“If I say this then you’ll probably say you’ll only change the things you want and not change anything else, am I right? Stop trying to interpret the space-time with those theories and logics in your head. Time is basically a sediment that the universe has been building until now. You’re basically trying to pull on a sleeping lion’s whisker then predict at what angle will the lion swipe its claw.”

Aisha snorted from the thought.

“You also travelled across time over short periods but it always resulted in the El Search Party’s defeat anyways, and it was merely done inside the broken world that D has created. But if you go beyond the Space-Time Gate, you can obtain power that transcends even that limit.”

Aisha warned gravely.

“Only fix the time you want and change the result to my liking. Such thing is impossible. Like Elsword said, time is for everyone. If someone’s time changes, then that will certainly impact everything else. The thought of ‘but it should be okay to change just this much’ is what brings about a disaster like this Time War.”

“.....”

“I can’t agree with this even if you are really determined to not become D. How is it possible to not modify anything when you have the power to change the universe however you want in your hand? Even I’m not confident if I could resist such a temptation if it was up to me.”

Aisha was basically saying the power granted when one passes through the Space-Time Gate was too big so it shouldn’t be granted to anyone. Her reasoning was sound.

“That’s why I’m against this. Not just with Add, but for anyone else that might try as well.”

“I’ll believe Add too.”

Aisha’s eyes turned sharp as she turned around from hearing a calm voice agree with Add, but then she paused. It was Elesis who had just agreed.

“I know what Aisha is worried about, but it’s also true that the current world is broken. Also, we have to give Add a chance to fix his wrongdoings. It’s actually something Add’s future did and not Add..... but Add wants to take responsibility for it.”

“Just how can we trust him, Big Sister Elly? If we trust him so blindly there’s no assurance that this whole incident won’t happen all over again.”

“I’ll stop Big Brother Add again if that happens.”

Elsword firmly made his decision. Raven who had been listening quietly also joined in.

“You can count me in this time when that happens.”

“That’s supposed to be ‘us’, right?”

Raven nodded when Rena smiled gently and corrected him. Chung also made his conclusion.

“If Mr.Add causes this war once more..... then all of us just have to stop him again . That’s the right thing to do.”

Helputt nodded while being proud of his son. Ran gave a very tired sigh.

“Do whatever you guys want. It seems the decision has already been made though.”

“Elder Brother, will you also help us when that happens?”

Ran didn't answer Ara's question. When everyone's opinions shifted towards agreeing with Add opening the Space-Time Gate, Aisha placed her hand on her forehead then sighed.

"Everyone seems to be not aware of how serious this situation is....."

"We know. But we still have to believe."

Elsword calmly expressed his opinion.

"Big Brother Add will never let all the time we've spent together go to waste."

"Gosh..... seriously."

Aisha gave a very long sigh but nodded in the end. She knew better than anyone else it was impossible to dissuade Elsword once he made up his mind.

"Well fine. Add, since D disappeared, the control over space-time should have transferred over to you. You should have the right to open the gate. Now, the method is to apply space formulas to the Space-Time Wormhole....."

Aisha changed her mind then started a long explanation. She almost seemed like a teacher giving lecture to a student.

"Ms.Aisha, you're just like a teacher!"

"I'm not doing this because I want to. It will be even more problem if Add made a mistake in opening the gate."

After finishing listening to Aisha's explanation, Add calculated the necessary formulas and prepared to commence opening of the Space-Time Gate. Under normal circumstances, it should have taken more time to apply the time formulas to the space formulas he usually used, but the clairvoyance ability helped immensely to speed up the process.

Dark orb started to appear above in the sky again. The orb that originally had the size of a coin quickly grew to become large as a person's hand. Add who was waiting for it to become large enough for a person to pass through turned his gaze around.

There were words he still had to say.

"Ara, about Eun....."

"Yes."

Ara nodded quietly. Add wanted to say that Eun couldn't come back, that they were only able to end this Time War because of her sacrifice. But he couldn't.

Ara's face was as if she already understood everything. Saying any unnecessary words would only hurt her more.

".....I'll take responsibility."

"For Ara?"

".....What kind of nonsense are you saying?"

Add gave a sharp glare at Elesis who said something weird unexpectedly. Elesis who didn't look too well spoke with a face devoid of smile.

"Didn't you just say you'll take responsibility for Ara?"

"Stop saying something weird! I was saying I'll be responsible for turning time back!"

"But you should also take responsibility for Ara."

Add's heart sank from Eve's icy indication. He wanted to change this topic but Elesis didn't look like she wanted to stop.

"And you should also take responsibility for me."

"....."

She's joking right? But there was no smile on Elesis' face.

"Why? Do you need an explanation?"

".....I'll do the best I can."

He had to take responsibility for Elesis turning her back on the El Search Party and becoming D's knight. That's how Add understood Elesis' words but there was someone who understood it differently.

"Big Brother Add, what kind of relationship do you have with Big Sis?"

Elsword urged for an answer with a stern expression. Add muttered from Elsword's attitude that felt as if he wouldn't back out until he heard the answer.

"Why is everyone doing this to me?"

"It's because everyone likes you, Add."

"....."

Add's face turned bright red from hearing Rena's words. Of course, Rena's words probably meant as comrades. But..... even that was embarrassing!

Everyone's attention was focused on him as if waiting for his answer. Add forced himself to speak because the atmosphere was forcing him to say something.

"J-Just because you said something like that....."

"Your face is all red."

"He's embarrassed, Ms.Aisha."

Add who had been stuttering gripped his fists tightly then turned his head away. But he still couldn't hide his ears that had become red as well.

Rena spoke playfully.

"We all like Add, but who does Add like the most?"

"Who would it be?"

"Wouldn't it be Elsword?"

Why was Chung saying something absurd like that? Add wanted to run away from this strange discussion with him as the main topic. He didn't understand why this Space-Time Gate was opening so slowly.

Elesis concluded the peaceful discussion.

"There seems to be various opinions but wouldn't Eve be the person that Add likes the most? They are still holding hands after all."

Add quickly tried to let go of Eve's hand from hearing this but Eve held his hand even more tightly instead. Add was surprised from Eve's action that seemed to be saying she won't allow him to let go.

But what Eve said as a response to the others was plain simple.

"Sorry, but I don't like Add in such manner. Only humans have that kind of feeling."

"....."

Add was at a loss for words from her stern declaration. It was such Eve-like remark..... but it wasn't something he wanted to hear from Eve's mouth.

Although he was still impressed by Eve's Nasodness.....

"But I do trust him deeply."

Like I said.....

“Because he’s my comrade who has been together with me until now and will be together with me from now on as well.”

“.....”

Add had his head drooped down when he heard Eve’s voice coming from avoid his head. He shut his mouth tightly from something unexplainable surging up from within him..... Only thought he had was that he didn’t know how he should answer.

Add who had been struggling to search for an answer for a while barely managed to open his mouth.

“Thanks.”

“Yes.”

Eve’s answer was simple as usual..... But that was enough. Add slowly settled his emotions as he let go of Eve’s hand.

Although regrettably, Eve allowed him to let go this time.

Add looked above his head. Space-Time Gate became large enough for a person to pass through.

“Then..... I’ll be going.”

“Let’s see each other again, Big Brother Add.”

Elsword smiled maturely. Aisha sighed.

“I’m warning you, don’t mess it up. I’ll get seriously angry if you mess up this time.”

“We’ll be counting on you, Add.”

Raven continued after Rena.

“We’ll be waiting.”

“Come back safely, Mr.Add.”

Then Ara spoke after Chung.

“Be careful and come back safely, Mr.Add.”

“Then goodbye for now, my prince.”

He wanted to ignore Elesis’ cold farewell..... Ran and Helputt also left their farewells.

“I don’t want to expect too much..... but I’ll still be hopeful.”

“I hope the Time War will truly end this time.”

Add jumped on his Dynamos after receiving everyone's farewells. Then Eve's calm words were heard as he was about to fly up to the Space-Time Gate.

"I believe that you'll make the right choice, Add."

".....Hmph."

Add didn't know how to answer..... so he just snorted then flew up towards the Space-Time Gate.

To restore the broken world back to normal.

4. Whirlwind of Time and Space

Beyond the Space-Time Gate.

Add had his own expectations about the place where you could restructure the universe..... but the scenery he came upon was completely different from his imagination.

It was an open field.

“What is this?”

Only grass could be seen for miles. There seemed to be a road but there were no people around to use it. Just when Add was worrying if the Space-Time Gate had malfunctioned.....

“It seems I have a guest.”

Add quickly turned his head towards the direction of the voice. Someone was standing leisurely in a place that should have been empty just moments ago.

There was a very suspicious looking man wearing a cracked mask.

“Who are you.....?”

“Did you come to restructure the universe, Add?”

Add couldn't hide his caution as he nodded when the man accurately pointed out his purpose of being here. Add didn't know who this man was, but there was no way he was a normal being if he was a resident of this primal universe.

“Kahaha, it's faster to come here than to directly change time. I was getting tired of waiting. So how should I change it for you?”

“Wait.....”

Add frowned from the nuance that he couldn't ignore. But the man quietly raised his hand and pointed his finger towards Add's chest as if he knew what Add wanted to ask. Add followed his finger to look down, then became frighteningly surprised.

Add's appearance and outfit had turned exactly same as D's. The man spoke while Add was touching his face in disbelief.

“It seems you might need a mirror. Let me lend you one.”

“.....Just who are you?”

The way the man spoke was as if he knew everything about Add's circumstances. The man gave a short laugh when Add became extremely guarded against him

"You don't have to be so nervous. I don't have intentions to harm you. At least for now."

"That's not the answer I want. What are....."

The masked man answered Add preemptively.

"I already knew since long ago that you were disturbing time. Although I think it would have been better if you had done it in a more flashier way."

"....."

"Of course, you might have ended up being bound here like me if you did that. Kahaha."

Tone of this man with an unpleasant laugh was as if he was considering Add and D as same entities. It wasn't that he couldn't distinguish the two..... it sounded more like he didn't feel it was necessary to distinguish them.

Well, Add wasn't here to talk idly anyways.

"I'll restore the time that guy before me..... no... I changed, back to normal. Is that possible?"

"Hoh?"

The man shrugged.

"You're someone who earned the right to come here. You conquered space and time and yet, all you want is restoration? Not to restructure the universe to your liking?"

"I won't do something like that."

Add's resolute expression froze from the man's next words.

"Shouldn't you at least meet your mother since you came all the way here?"

"You....."

This guy knew too much about him. The man who still haven't revealed his name yet seemed to grin behind his mask regardless of what Add was feeling.

"You had the power to time travel already. You just refrained from it because you were having trouble with subtle adjustments."

"....."

"But in here, you can freely time travel as you'd like. Are you still not going to go see her?"

Add shut his lips tightly. Did he not want to see someone who he wanted to save even by risking everything?

Of course..... he wanted to see her. No, not just that, save her. He wanted to be with her again. He could do anything for that.

He could sell his soul to the devil..... No, he could even become a devil himself!

“.....I won’t see her.”

Add forcefully calmed down his heated head. He wanted to see his mother again so much, but he wouldn’t be satisfied with just seeing once he saw her.

He’ll most likely go against Aisha’s warning, betray his comrades’ trust in him and try to change the time that his mother dies.

But then the Time War won’t end. He’ll be too ashamed to see those guys that believed and let him open the Space-Time Gate.

Add spoke with a raspy voice.

“I won’t go to any other time. I’ll..... just restore it.”

“Kahaha, I don’t feel like helping you, but I should since I’m a guide after all.....”

The masked man gave an unpleasant laugh as if he could clearly see Add’s inner turmoil.

“But you can’t just stand there and do nothing. Space-time restoration isn’t an easy thing to do. You should clean up your own mess, right?”

“.....What do I need to do?”

Of course, it wouldn’t be so easy.

“There are two pasts that you desire deep inside your heart. Space-time restoration will only be possible if you make the correct choice in each of them. If you can do that, I’ll take care of the rest.”

“Correct choices?”

Why was something like that needed? But the masked man wagged his finger.

“You must not be aware, but you gained a truly incredible power. You’re an existence that can change the history by merely breathing. Of course, there’s no guarantee that it will become better history..... No matter how much I try to restore time, it will be impossible if there are remaining regrets in your heart that subconsciously impacts the universe.

“.....So, my subconscious is the problem?”

“Yes, if you want to step down from the throne of space-time, you need to let go consciously. You need to make choices to consciously cut off the desires you wanted so much. And that’s what you’d call a correct choice.”

After the man said this, hundreds, thousands of holograms started to rise up around him. Add could make out space and time coordinate formulas amongst them, but there were many other formulas and numbers that he didn’t know.

“If you really want to restore the universe, then come back after letting go of those conflicts in your heart.”

“Correct choices.....”

Will that be possible for him? Add looked sadly at his changed self then closed and open his eyes.

“Alright, if I can fix the wrongs I’ve committed.”

“Let me say this though..... It doesn’t matter to me if you don’t want to restore. You can play with the universe all you want if you’d like. That will also lessen my work.”

Add ignored the man’s smirk and turned around. Then a Space-Time Wormhole began to be generated in front of him. Add didn’t open it, the man opened it for him.

Add looked at the thick black Space-Time Wormhole then closed his eyes.

Two pasts he had to go back to. It was obvious what one of them was.

“.....I’m coming, mother.”

To the point that he wanted to fix no matter what.

Blue sky could be seen.

“This place is.....?”

Add looked around then gasped in surprise after seeing a familiar mansion. He was in a place he thought about even in his dreams, his home.

“.....”

And it was before the mansion had burned down. It was a place he grew up in. His heart beat so loudly that he wanted to pinch his cheek to check if this wasn’t a dream. Add struggled to keep his mind calm.

“I.....”

Just how much have he longed to come back to this time? To save his mother?

But he wasn't here to save his mother right now. Add closed his eyes tightly then shook his head as all sorts of emotions swirled within him.

He wanted to ignore the mansion because his chest was boiling up from inside and it felt as if tears were about to pour out of his eyes.

“No.....”

But that suspicious masked guide certainly had a reason for sending him to this point of time. The ‘correct choice’ he talked about was obviously..... not stopping his mother's death.

The reason he was sent here was to let go.

Add suppressed his emotions as he slowly approached the mansion. There were security personnel, but Add used to be a young master of this place. Not only that, but he had the Dynamos so he could reach the mansion's garden without being noticed.

Add closed his eyes and sighed from the familiar sight of the garden. Even though he tried to calm himself, this fresh air, this familiar scenery, made it very difficult for him to do so. Add diverted his attention to something else because it felt like he might make a mistake if he kept looking around the garden.

“When is this.....?”

It certainly was before that tragedy struck. But he didn't know exactly when this was. And it wasn't like he could just go up to someone and ask.....

Add was thinking about what to do when he sensed people approaching and quickly hid behind a tree. As lively footsteps were heard.....

“What a nice weather we have today!”

.....An unbelievable voice was heard. Add opened his eyes widely due to the feeling of his heart almost stopping.

Owner of that voice was..... Add himself!

Add blinked numerous times in disbelief then felt that he couldn't believe this no matter what so he peeked out to look from behind the tree. Add's face froze immediately.

There was him when he was younger.

“.....Huh?”

Just what happened? He never experienced a time paradox when time traveling so far. Didn't the universe not accept same entities? Add thought of numerous theories even while being astonished, but then he looked down at himself and sighed.

"I see..... So I'm the devil now?"

There was a reason for his appearances becoming like this. It was a trick that Eun mentioned. As Add took control over time and space, he became an existence separated from time.

Add was now in the same position as D.

That's why..... he could come back to the past like this and look at his younger self. Looking at one's younger self with their own eyes, it was an experience that normal people could never experience. Even while feeling bitter, Add looked objectively.

His younger self had a bright expression, and seemed well mannered despite his young age. He could be basically described as a perfect young master of a wealthy household. Although he did seem a bit overconfident.....

"That's me.....?"

So that kid will grow up to be me? Add smiled bitterly while feeling satirical..... Then his eyes opened widely because someone else appeared.

Long hair blew about in the wind.

Woman sitting on an autonomous Nasod wheelchair came into his view. The woman who looked sickly was smiling gently as she watched young Add.

The person he thought about even in his dreams.

"But it might rain tomorrow."

"Then it might be difficult for you to take a stroll in the garden, mother. I think that wheelchair needs an umbrella feature after all, and a parasol feature too."

The voice he heard in his dreams.

Add was nailed to the ground and couldn't move. The person he longed to see again so much..... was right in front of his eyes right now. She was alive, and talking to his younger self.

The person he longed to see again the most. The person most important to him.

His mother.

"....."

Add stood still because it felt as if something was stuck in his throat. Meanwhile, the conversation between young Add and his mother continued.

“You don’t have to do that. Watching the rain while sitting in the living room is enjoyable too.”

“But that wheelchair can certainly use more features. I think it needs flight, defense, and most of all, a shock absorption feature. Actually, I’d like to improve on the existing offensive feature if I could.....”

Mother smiled when Add excitedly expressed his opinions.

“It’s not always good to add more.”

“Huh? But isn’t it always better to have more features?”

“Sometimes, things are better off not being added or fixed. Just like an old rocking chair.”

Young Add’s face was as if he couldn’t understand. Mother approached him by moving the wheelchair then gently petted Add’s head.

“But I’m happy for your thoughts. I’m always thankful for your kindness.”

“N-not at all. It’s something obvious, I’m your son after all!”

Young Add’s face reddened from his mother’s compliment.

“Nothing in this world is obvious. Even if an event might seem obvious, never forget to be thankful about it. Don’t forget this.”

“Yes, mother!”

Young Add grinned brightly then nodded. Mother spoke softly.

“I’ll take a stroll bit longer so could you go back first and prepare for your studies?”

“But I already finished the homework you gave me yesterday.”

“Then preview the part we’ll study today. I’ll quiz you about it.”

When mother spoke mischievously, young Add nodded with a strangely competitive expression. It looked like he wanted to pass the quiz flawlessly to impress his mother.

Silence descended in the garden when young Add ran back inside the house.

“.....”

Add who was eavesdropping on the conversation from behind the tree sighed because it felt as if his heart was being struck. He did somewhat..... remember this event from long time ago. They were nostalgic times.

But these times will soon burn away into ashes and disappear.....

“Then, will you show yourself?”

“.....”

Add winced from hearing a soft voice. That voice was certainly calling out to him.

“I’m sorry but my body isn’t too well so it’s difficult for me to move. Could you show yourself instead?”

“.....”

Mother did always have unexpectedly sharp senses. Add bit his lips nervously but he couldn’t just stay like this longer.

Most of all, he wanted to see his mother closer.

Add couldn’t suppress the urge and jumped out to show himself to his mother. His mother saw him then remained wordless for a long time.

“Uh.....”

What will his mother say after seeing his grown-up son? But a cold voice was returned to Add who showed himself with numerous expectations.

“What business do you have here?”

“.....”

Her tone was as if clearly drawing a line..... this was unlike Add’s expectations. Add inhaled deeply from his mother’s cold response and expression towards him, but his reasoning was now catching up.

He had the appearance of a grown-up Add right now, and he was not even in his normal form at that. Who in the world would think that a devil with dark eyes is their son?

He knew this.... but it still felt as if the world was collapsing around him.

As Add stayed speechless from the feeling of his heart getting torn apart, his mother spoke in a cold tone.

“I have a son here. If you’re here to cause trouble, I’d like you to not get him involved.”

“.....”

She must be expressing that she will retaliate if he didn't accept her request. Add slowly settled his uneasy breathing at his mother's hostile response.

It felt painful as if his throat was burning, but he couldn't afford to keep silent any longer.

“I..... was just passing by.”

He didn't want to worry his mother.

“This mansion looked nice..... So..... I was just taking a look inside.”

He couldn't reveal the truth.....to his mother. No, he wanted to! Say that I'm your son! I crossed countless times to finally arrive here and save you! I'm going to save you! He wanted to reveal everything!

But he couldn't.

If he did that, all his times together with the El Search Party, and all those grueling battles will have been for nothing. He'll be betraying the feelings of those that sent him here with their trust.

He knew what the right choice was in his head.

“That's..... all.”

This was all he could say to his mother who was showing him such an icy expression. Even if he saved his mother by doing whatever it took right now, that will not only ruin the task of restoring the universe back to normal..... it will also change the future unpredictably just like Aisha's warning.

If even worse future awaited because he changed the past here, will Add be able to ignore it?

If the future became worse because of the past he changed, then he will certainly try to control time again, adjust the variables and attempt to change it for the better. Continuing until he got the result he's satisfied with.

That was..... basically, Add becoming D.

The reason D kept throwing the dice was because he thought Eve chose to give up her emotions because of his mistake.

The long battle where one continuously rolls the dice with the resolve of wanting to change their mistake, the Time War, cannot happen again.

He had to end it with his own hands.

For the sake of those people that sent him here believing that he'll make the right choice.

.....Even if the result is him ignoring his mother's death.

Add couldn't look at his mother's face directly so he only looked down at his feet.

Mother didn't say anything. It should be obvious to call for security if a strange man invaded their garden..... But she evacuated his son first, then faced the intruder bravely by herself.

This person was certainly..... his beloved mother.

"Then..... I'll be going now."

This was enough. Just being able to see her face one more time was sufficient.

Add pressed down his overflowing heart as he turned away. A voice spoke to him as he was about to leave.

"You shouldn't always be adding."

"....."

A kind voice.

"There are things better off not being fixed."

Add couldn't move because of the tremor spreading throughout his entire body. There was a sound of wheelchair approaching, and then a sound of her standing up.

Then the sense of her touch as she opened her arms and held him in her embrace.

"....."

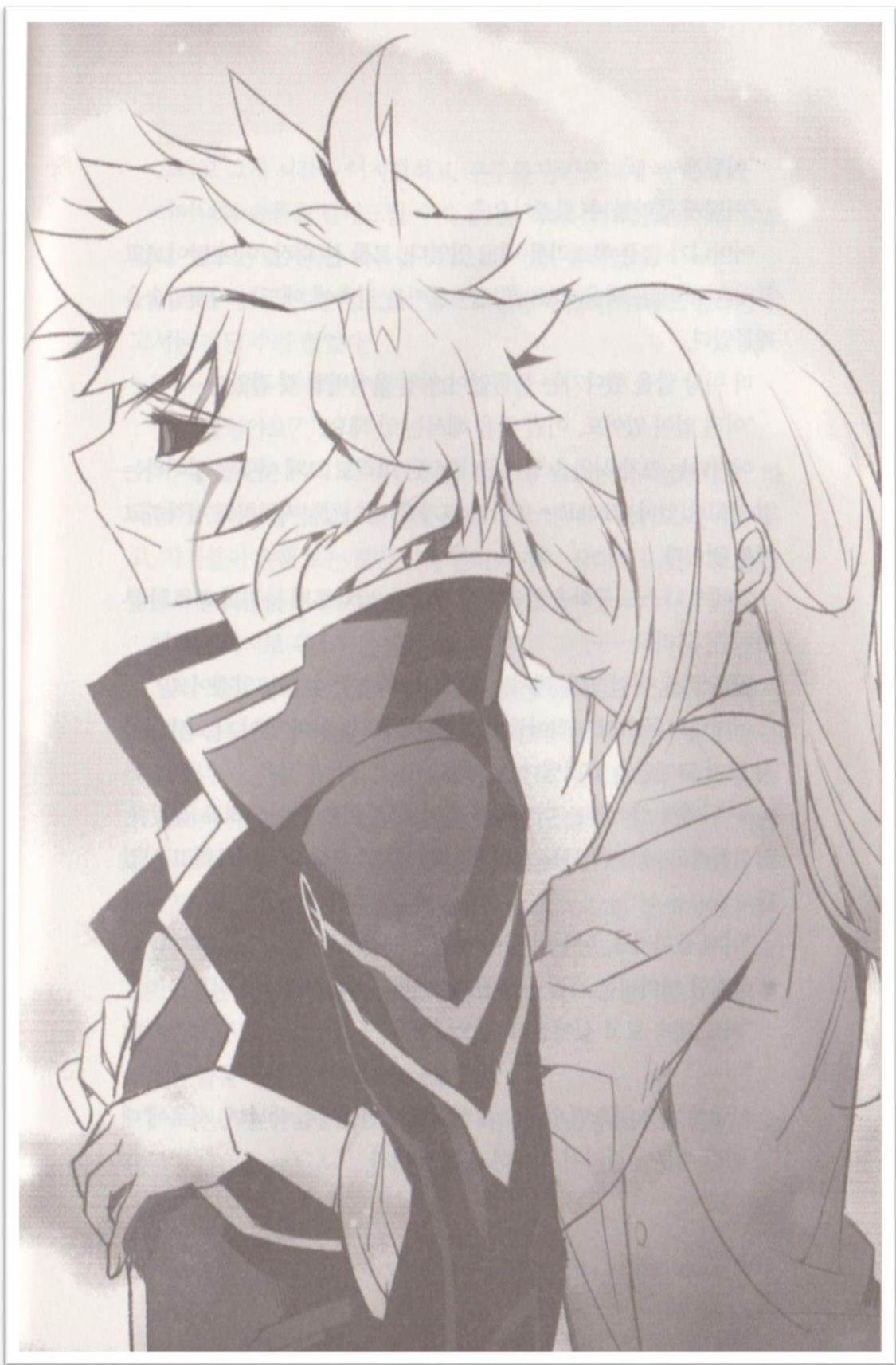
Add didn't have the courage to look back so he stayed still. He finally managed to strengthen his resolve, but it felt like all that will break down if he spoke a single line back to his mother.

He wanted to immediately turn around and hug her in return..... but he will not be able to restrain himself anymore if he did that.

"You shouldn't be here right now."

His precious person spoke regrettably while still embracing him. Add barely managed to nod in answer. He shouldn't be here. Only one allowed to be here was his past self, the young Add.

Her nostalgic voice being whispered into his ear broke the lock on his heart that was holding him back from speaking.



“How.....?”

“How could I not recognize?”

Mother had a sad voice. She actually recognized Add immediately when he showed himself and had been scolding him. Add shut his mouth tightly from the feeling of something warm trickling down his cheek.

It felt like he'd end up crying immaturely if he said anything more.

“No matter what happens, you shouldn't do something like this.”

Mother knew that he came back in time, and that it was something wrong. And..... she probably had a good guess as to why he came back too.

She was someone who taught him Nasod engineering after all. And she was also unusually quick-witted. And.....

“You can't do something like this from now on. Can you..... promise me this?”

Mother's voice was becoming damp as well. Add couldn't bring himself to speak so he only nodded.

He wanted to look back at his mother who was hugging him and hug her back. Tell her to be at ease, that your son has grown up well. He wanted to show himself to her a bit more.

“Now go back. To the time where you're supposed to be.”

But his mother won't allow this. It was cruel. But.....

“Otherwise I'll keep wanting to see you too.”

“.....”

It will be difficult to part if they stayed like this. They wouldn't be able to separate because of their attachment.

And that will disturb time, and break the universe.

He couldn't console his mother's sorrow. He couldn't change his mother's death. Add suppressed his tearing heart and moved his mouth.

He couldn't just part like this. He had to say something. He couldn't bear to not say anything.

“I.....got to know some people.”

“Are they your friends?”

“No, not my friends. Well, they call me their comrade. But every one of them are idiots. They are completely naïve, don’t listen to what I tell them and keep getting themselves into situations that makes things even harder for them. Being with them is so stifling and frustrating.”

Add forced himself to brighten his voice.

“There’s a red-haired idiot who always charges forwards without thinking. There’s a girl who’s too naïve to understand what I’m talking about, but there’s also a fox inside her. It’s irking because this fox likes pulling pranks on people. There’s also an Elf and she’s difficult to deal with because she’s too caring. There’s a Nasod as well.....and this is a quite interesting one. This Nasod keeps insisting that she doesn’t have emotions but that’s not true at all. Not only that, she has such high degree of completion. She’s probably the only Nasod like that in entire history.”

Mother quietly listened to his son’s continuing descriptions then replied in a blissful tone.

“You must love your friends very much.”

“.....They are not friends. They are the ones that keeps calling me their comrade on their own.”

“Please cherish them.”

Mother’s arms let go of him then moved further. Add unknowingly tried to grab the tip of her hands as they moved away but refrained.

They both knew what they had to do.

Her voice came from behind his back.

“Looks like you’re doing well. I’m relieved. I’m glad I could see you like this.”

“.....”

What should he say? No. Any words he says now will be pointless.

“Please be happy.....”

Mother’s voice called his real name. Add nodded to answer but he didn’t want to move. He couldn’t move forward.

He didn’t want to leave his mother and this time.

Gentle hands slowly pressed on his back then lightly pushed him forwards.

“Go forward.”

“.....”

“Don’t be caught up by the past.”

Add slowly took a step forward due to his mother's guidance. Each step was heavy but he had to go forward.

He couldn't betray his mother's feelings. She probably guessed the circumstances behind Add being here and yet was still pushing his back telling him to go forth.

Son moves his steps.

"I..... cannot save you no matter what I do."

As he speaks in a voice that tears apart his heart.

"I'm sorry for giving up....."

Mother answers.

"You came here today to give me a gift. A gift that all parents can never be thankful enough for."

With words that caresses her son's heart.

"I'm glad..... I could at least see you safely grown up like this. Thank you for always caring for me so much."

Add stopped his steps then answered.

"Thank you."

"Thank you as well."

Add clenched his fists after hearing her final words, he suppressed his hesitation then started walking forwards again.

The feeling of wanting to look back, wanting to cling to her was surging up.

He wanted to stay here a bit longer. He wanted to talk to her some more.

But that will pain and sadden his mother even more. Two of them shared the feeling of not wanting to part with each other, they wanted this time to last longer because they both knew what fate awaited in this time.

Mother understood everything but was pushing his back to send him off.

He couldn't betray her feelings.

He couldn't betray her expectations.

He couldn't defy his mother's feelings when she was defying her own tears so she could send his son forwards.

"Goodbye, mother....."

Calling her mother at the end was the only indulgence he could allow. As his mother watched him from behind, Add straightened his back and headed forwards confidently as to not betray his mother's expectations.

Even though he was crying.

So that his mother behind him can wave her hand with a smile.

Space-time shook.

Add grunted from the new scenery in front of him. Space Time Wormhole appeared soon as he moved away from his mother then forcefully teleported him.

"Where is this place.....?"

It must be that suspicious guide's doing. That guide didn't give Add any moments to collect himself from such quick departure from his mother.

Add felt extremely displeased but he didn't see anyone to complain to. Add looked around then realized that this was a place he didn't know.

"No....."

He should be seeing this place for the first time but it felt like he saw it somewhere before.

A giant Nasod was functioning without a sound.

"Hmm....."

Although still gloomy from departure with his mother, Add's interests were piqued so he unknowingly examined that Nasod. It seemed to be prioritizing minimum power usage because it didn't show any reaction despite how Add intruded on its domain.

"Is it autonomous? Anyways, why was I sent here.....?"

According to that guide, there were two pasts that could be affected by his subconscious so he had to make correct choices in both.

Add obviously guessed one of them would be a past related to his mother, but what should he fix here?

Add's footsteps as he approached the giant Nasod stopped. No explanation was given but Add immediately understood why he was here.

Green colored orb in the middle, and a Nasod sleeping inside.....

It was Eve.

“Wait.....”

Just what was this turn of events? Add pressed on his forehead then pondered in confusion. He thought he might have arrived in the future, but the guide made it certain that this was a past.

“Then this is before the El Search Party was formed.....”

Add quickly made this conclusion as he looked around the room then looked down at Eve again. Eve had her eyes closed and didn't look like she'd wake up any time soon.

Add recalled that Eve was an Ancient Nasod and she was waiting for the day to wake up right now. He wasn't sure if this information was something he already knew or if it was acquired by time travelling.

It could be that he knew this because he was now a transcendent existence separated from time with the control over space-time.

He was a devil wandering through time. It wasn't strange if he had many special abilities.

“.....Then can I use quintuple now?”

Add spoke emptily as he clenched his fist then opened it. He currently possessed a power stronger than anyone else but there was nothing he could do as he wanted.

He couldn't even change the past where his mother died.....

“.....”

Add struggled then shook his head in agony. Something surged up from within his chest every time he recalled that departure. He felt like going back immediately to forcefully save his mother.

Suppressing himself not to when he had the power do so was ever so painful.

“Haah.....”

Just when Add calmed down, he became surprised from sensing a vibration in the ground. Something must have happened far away because the shock was being transferred all the way here.

“What was that?”

What’s the reason for sending Add to this past where Eve was still asleep? Could it be that he had to save Eve from an impending danger?

Just when Add prepared himself as he started walking towards where the sound came from.....

Wrrrrrrrr.

Metallic sound was heard from behind. Add doubted his ears but then sound of someone moving was heard a short moment later.

“.....Who are you?”

It was Eve’s voice. Add almost turned around but stopped himself. Strange. This was strange.

“What era is this?”

“.....”

Judging by Eve’s words, she understood that she just woke up from a very long sleep. And Add knew the course of events that led to Eve joining the El Search Party after this.

‘It can’t be.....’

Add could change that history. A tremor went down his spine.

He could change the first person that Eve met after her hibernation to not be Elsword.....

But to Add.

Add almost turned around to face Eve from this sudden urge but barely managed to withhold himself. Eve seemed to be looking around to examine the situation.

“Altera’s El has been destroyed. Just who did such a thing.....?”

“.....”

Then a sound of Eve standing up was heard. Add had all sorts of thoughts. He could create and achieve completely different history than before.

Wasn’t he always frustrated that Eve only looked at Elsword and never looked at him?

He could solve all that right here. He could change the first person that Eve met when she opened her eyes to Add and not Elsword. Not only that, he could change the time Eve spent with Elsword into time she spent with Add instead.

“Ev.....”

He could change the person Eve looked at into him.

Add became caught up in this thought. All of history will change if he just turns his head around, go up to her and reach out his hand.

He could instantly grasp what he wanted to obtain so much.

“.....Why aren’t you identifying yourself, intruder?”

Caution started to form in Eve’s voice. Well, it was given since he was only showing his back and not saying anything.

But when Add continued to keep quiet, Eve started approaching him. Add sensed it would be dangerous like this so he spoke out unknowingly.

“Don’t come closer.”

“.....”

Eve understood and stopped her steps. A prim response came back.

“I activated unexpectedly because Altera’s El was destroyed. My name is Eve. Did you destroy the El here?”

“.....”

“Answer me.”

Eve’s stern questioning caused a conflict inside Add. He was about to go crazy from the feeling of wanting to turn around and not turn around clashing with each other.

Eve seemed confused as she moved her steps again when Add’s silence went on.

“Just what is it? Why aren’t you answering.....”

“Don’t come closer!!”

Add’s shout echoed throughout the room. Eve’s surprised reaction was conveyed to Add even without having to look back.

As Add’s voice still echoed throughout the room, he closed his eyes..... then sighed.

He can now save his mother, and change the first person that Eve meets into him. But doing so will make the task of restoring the universe impossible, and he'll also end up following in D's footsteps.

He had to end it here. End everything.

He had to make the right choice.

".....I revealed my name. Reveal yours, rude person."

"....."

He couldn't tell her his name, he shouldn't reveal who he was. Doing so will cause the Time War again.

Add immediately came to a conclusion as he spoke in a mocking voice.

"Why does a Nasod like you need to know? That my name is....."

If he revealed his name here, he'll be the first person that Eve met. Add swallowed his name with the last ounce of self-restraint he had, but this made Eve react even more confusedly.

"Why did you stop in middle of your words? Did the courtesy in this era degenerate like that?"

"That my name is....."

He couldn't use the name Add. He just wanted to leave without saying anything but he couldn't because the guide wasn't opening the Space-Time Wormhole. That was obvious, there was a danger of this time changing if Add subconsciously wished it to.

Right to leave was only granted after properly choosing the correct choice.

Just like he chose to not save his mother even after meeting her again.

This will only end if he chooses to not reveal his identity after meeting Eve.

Should he say he's a devil(diablo)? But he was reluctant about using that name. Because he promised that fox, whom he could never meet again, that he'll never become a devil no matter what.

"That my name is....."

"....."

Eve was waiting for him to speak. Add spoke with a sigh mixed into his voice.

"Diabolic Esper."



Someone who was ever so like the devil but wasn't. A devil-like person with supernatural power. It was a name Add urgently came up with due to being driven into a corner by Eve's questioning.

".....That's a strange name."

"Yes, it's strange....."

Add agreed with an empty laugh.

He wanted to reveal everything to her. He wanted to ease his conscience by saying that he was the person responsible for breaking this universe, and that he came all this way to fix that mistake, that he hurt her so many times in that process. But he couldn't say any one of those things.

Even without those topics, he wanted to at least chat with her idly about various other things within the line of not revealing his identity.

But he had a thought he shouldn't at the same time.

Eve just woke up and doesn't know anything. A single wrong word that he slips might influence and change her differently. Revealing that name before was only to make the correct choice..... he would have liked to leave without saying a word if possible.

But there was no sign of Space-Time Wormhole opening no matter how much he waited. His resolve wasn't accepted with merely hiding his name.

Add sighed then spoke calmly as possible.

"Eve, someone will come here soon. No, you might go outside and meet them instead."

".....The group that destroyed Altera's El?"

Add nodded accordingly. If Add doesn't intervene, Eve will first meet with Elsword, then with the other El Search Party members. She'll meet with Add last.

The original timeline should have this kind of trajectory.

"Yes, there will be a stupid red-haired kid. You should....."

"....."

Add clenched his fists. He couldn't bring himself to speak this but he had to. This was the way to return the broken world back to normal.

"Become friends with him."

"I refuse."

"What?!"

Add almost turned around in surprise but urgently covered his face with his hands then stopped. It looked lame but thankfully, Eve wasn't minding Add's reaction because she was busy looking around.

Eve's response was heard when Add quickly turned away again.

"I'll be the one to decide such things, Di..... what was your name again?"

"....."

You even forgot the name?

"My functions aren't working properly because I was woken in unexpected circumstances. Tell me your name again."

"No, I refuse....."

So will it get erased like this? Add felt dejection, gladness and bitterness at the same time as he let out a pained sigh.

Everything was going in the right direction but that didn't ease his pain.

"I should go punish the rude intruders that forcefully woke me up."

After Eve said this, she seemed to hesitate for a moment then spoke primly.

"Like I mentioned, my functions aren't working properly yet. Could you lend me your hand for a bit?"

"....."

"I don't have any information on this era. I'll lend you my strength later on if you accept my request now."

It was such a powerful temptation. If Add nodded here, Eve's likeability towards him will skyrocket.

Eve spoke carefully for some odd reason when Add didn't answer right away.

"I may not look it, but I'm the Queen of Nasods. I won't be a hindrance to you."

The future that awaited if he accepted this request will be ever so sweet. What he always wanted will be achieved immediately.

He could rewrite time so that the one Eve really held dear and cared for was not Elsword, but him instead. It was such a sweet temptation for Add whose mind was in tatters from ignoring the choice of saving his mother from death.

He almost felt like nodding unconsciously to fill the gaping hole in his heart.

“I’ll have to refuse.”

“.....How come?”

Eve’s voice contained significant amount of displeasure. Anyone wouldn’t feel too great after getting the hand they reached out refused, and it will feel even worse for Eve since she had a strong pride as Queen of Nasods.

“It’s easier for me to work alone. So I’m going to refuse playing ‘friends’ with you.”

“.....F-friends? Don’t talk as if I asked for your help because I was lonely. I merely needed an informant!”

Eve unexpectedly replied in an emotional tone. It seemed that the word ‘friend’ was a key word that resonated her emotions. This unexpected response made Add want to continue this conversation..... but that was no good.

They had to separate quickly. And Add knew how to make Eve move in a situation like this better than anyone else.

“Queen of Nasods can’t gather information on her own? How useless are you.....?”

“Useless?! What did you just say?”

Rage dwelled in Eve’s voice. Her tone was as if she couldn’t contain her anger because of a very aggravating insult. Add winced internally but still ran his mouth.

“What? Am I wrong? Then try taking care of the intruders on your own. I’ll become your friend after seeing how you handle this.”

“Fine! Just you wait!”

Eve didn’t hide her temper as she moved towards the exit. She stopped momentarily then turned around to speak.

“Prepare to cancel that insult when I come back. Also..... It’s not like I needed a friend. Don’t get the wrong idea.”

“Do as you’d like. Kukukuk.”

Eve didn’t answer and left when Add laughed back unpleasantly. But Add could tell there was a displeasure mixed in her footsteps.

After leaving like that, Eve will meet Elsword.

“.....This is the correct choice.”

After swallowing his bitterness, Add suddenly realized he wanted to stay in this place. Wouldn't Eve come back after knocking out Elsword then demand to him to cancel the insult?

He can't be her first friend..... But can he at least become her second friend? Would that count as not changing time?

Add laughed bitterly as he thought about this idea. Then the air shook.....a Space-Time Wormhole was being generated.

"Devils tend to only tell lies. It must be same with something that's like a devil....."

Add sighed as he stared at the generating wormhole.

Just as Eve revealed, she wasn't functioning properly yet. He was covered in shadow the whole time so Eve shouldn't remember his appearance properly.

Not even his name will remain.

"This is goodbye..... Queen."

Add left a farewell that will never be heard then threw himself into the Space-Time Wormhole.

Across the Space-Time Gate.

When Add came back to the spot he was before, his jaw dropped in astonishment at the scene before him. Countless moving hologram videos expanded far as he could see, from end of the horizon to the end of sky. Each video being shown in these thousands, millions of holograms represented some place and time.

And the number of holograms were still increasing.

"Kahaha, welcome back."

The masked man who sent Add to make the correct choices smiled sinisterly. His skill as he manipulated the holograms even while talking was no joke.

The man must have read Add's reaction because he shrugged.

"I'm the manager of space-time. Nothing is too difficult for me long as it's within the rules."

".....I see, so will the time return to normal now?"

"I just finished the preparations. I created a restore point long ago after all. It was long before you arrived in this place."

His tone was as if..... he predicted that Add might come here one day to turn the universe back to normal.

Add was about to tell him to hurry up but paused from what the man said next.

“Ah, this might sound blatantly obvious but everything will disappear when the space-time is restored. Everything about the Time War is rolled back so that it never happened.”

“.....”

“Everything is wiped clean, even more than the memories you lost during your loops. Even you will have almost no memories remaining because of the feedback of falling from the status of ruler of space-time into a mere human.”

Mouth behind the mask smirked as if it was amusing.

“Everything you’ve done will have been for nothing. No one will recall or remember. It will merely be something that never happened. Everything was only your pitiful struggle. But no..... maybe this is a good thing for you. Since no one will remember the wrongs you’ve committed. Even you will forget about them.”

“.....”

“What a legitimate pardon for your crimes.”

The man began to clap while mocking. Add who had been quietly listening to the man’s cruel comments closed his eyes.

“I won’t forget.”

“Like I said.....”

“It might turn out like you said. Everyone will forget what I’ve done and even my own memories might become hazy. I might..... target Eve like a clueless idiot to return to the past again. No, this will certainly happen.”

Add sighed as his heart became stifled.

“Obsessions turn into diseases if they run too deep. This obsession at least will probably still remain in my heart.”

“Then the Time War will happen again. How futile....”

“That won’t ever happen again.”

Add declared with certainty.

“Even if I become obsessed with Eve, even if I forget most of the sins I’ve committed in the past..... I’ll at least remember one thing. No matter what.”

“.....”

“I’m an El Search Party.”

Was it because this was the end?

“I’ll never..... betray those stupid idiots. Never, no matter what. I’ll be together with them in both life and death.”

“.....Are you serious?”

“Yes, those idiots are.....”

The words Add never spoke before finally came out of his mouth.

“My most precious comrades.”

“.....”

Mocking tone disappeared from the masked man. Eyes behind the cracked mask gleamed seriously. He gazed piercingly at Add’s eyes for a while then nodded.

“I see, so this is the choice you are making. Then let’s start.”

“.....Okay.”

“Even when everything turns into nothing, I’ll watch to see if you can follow through with your resolve.”

Add nodded wordlessly to answer the masked man’s serious words.

Actually, even Add wasn’t sure what will happen in the future. Like the masked man said, if he turns from the ruler of space-time back into a mere human, and is caught up by the shock of the universe being restored, then the memory of the Time War probably will not remain within him.

There was nothing that prevented him from targeting Eve again trying to go back to the past, then repeat the same errors again. But.....

“I won’t forget.....”

The feeling of wanting to save Eve, and the regret he felt when he realized the cause of Eve’s horrible fate was himself.

The feeling of wanting to save his mother, and the grief he felt when he had to turn away from her and say goodbye.

The final image of a fox who believed in him despite knowing he was the cause of all problems.

The image of his comrades that believed in him even to the point of throwing away their lives for him.

Trust of his comrades that granted him chance to turn back his errors.

The times they spent together.

The feelings they shared together.

“I’ll..... never forget.”

King of Space and Time closed his eyes while numerously promising to himself. Then countless lights glimmered beyond his eyelids as everything started to turn back.

It was the end of the broken world, end of the broken time.

5. Time to Love

Sander.

The El Search Party was in middle of an intense battle against True Karis, a few dozen meters' tall demon born form Karis fusing with Heart of Behemoth.

“She’s too big!!”

Elsword blocked the scythe True Karis swung at him then got thrown backwards. Their strength difference was like that of an elephant and an ant. Aisha quickly fired a fireball to keep True Karis occupied while chastising Elsword.

“You idiot! Stop trying to block it, dodge!”

“Two of you, don’t argue now.”

Rena spoke calmly as she pulled her bowstring. Arrows flew in and accurately hit their marks but it didn’t accomplish much because the demon was too big. Even if Rena could hit her mark with 100% accuracy, her arrows would probably feel like mosquito bites for True Karis.

“.....This is inside Behemoth so there isn’t even a retreat path.”

Raven spoke gravely as he slew the trocks that were emerging from all over the place. This place was where Behemoth’s heart was located. Even if they wanted to leave, there was no way True Karis, who fused with Behemoth’s heart, would let them.

“Then there are no other options. We have to defeat the enemy.”

Eve commented level-headedly as she manipulated her gears to take down multiple trocks. But trocks were merely minions that True Karis could summon endlessly, it was pointless to take them down before True Karis.

And their problems didn’t end with just True Karis and trocks.

Crack!!

Dozens of tentacles broke out of the ground and attacked the El Search Party. But Chung ran in using his cannon as a shield then uprooted the tentacles with a single cannon swing.

Chung cleared up the tentacles in an instant then shouted towards the group.

“There will be no end like this. We have to defeat Karis quickly!”:

“No matter how much larger she became, she’ll certainly have a weakness, Mr.Chung!”

Ara replied after waving her spear to clear away rest of the tentacles. Someone seemed to slide towards the two that were exchanging opinions then sighed. It was Elesis who just blocked True Karis' scythe.

She had managed to block the attack unlike Elsword but it seemed she couldn't help getting pushed back.

"I do see a weakness. But....."

Elesis explained simply as her comrades' attention focused on her.

"We have to attack the part where Karis is fused with Behemoth. It's near the part where Karis' leg is buried. That place seems to be covered even more thickly and something like a core appears whenever she attacks. I'm certain that is her weakness."

"I understand..... but what should we do, Big Sister Elesis?" Aisha questioned dishearteningly.

It was definitely not easy to approach True Karis who could swing a huge scythe around, used magic and summoned trocks and tentacles. Elesis had tried approaching just now but could only manage to hold out until she got pushed back.

"Someone has to distract her. But....."

It would be difficult to hold out because each of 'True Karis' attacks were just too ferocious. Just who could take on the role of distracting True Karis?

Inside of Behemoth, a boy floating near the ceiling was smiling coldly.

"Kukukuk....."

True Karis and the El Search Party was fighting below him. He could easily tell that the El Search Party was in danger.

They'll most likely get annihilated if he just kept spectating like this. Well, it didn't matter to him at all..... is what boy thought as his gaze headed towards Eve.

"But I can't let her break....."

He spent so much time investigating secretly and following her all the way here. Boy smiled bitterly as he jumped on his Dynamos.

"I'll give you guys a hand, be thankful idiots!"

True Karis who had been focusing on the El Search Party on the ground became shocked and urgently swung her scythe when a boy suddenly appeared and flew towards her from the air. But the

boy had already analyzed enough data on True Karis' attacks. The boy dodged with an acrobatic flight maneuver then fired a shockwave towards Karis.

“Araaaaagh!”

True Karis screamed in rage as part of her neck got torn off. She then ferociously swung her scythe again and conjured Death Strike at the same time. It would be the end for the boy if he was hit by even one of these endlessly falling demonic mana orbs, but the boy didn't show any sign of fear.

He merely made a satisfying smile!

“Alright then, flail all you want! Fool! This much is nothing for me!!”

As the boy precariously evaded the raining mana orbs, the El Search Party at the bottom started responding too. Defeating True Karis was their priority, identity of the boy who suddenly appeared could come later.

“Kuuugh!! You! Just who are-!!”

True Karis became impatient when not even a single Death Strike landed and started to wave her scythe and arms frantically. But the boy dodged them all while continuing to fire particle blasts.

“Kyaaaaah!”

True Karis who had been flailing like someone who kept getting stung by a bee suddenly let out a different scream this time.

The El Search Party had arrived below her and started attacking the core she kept buried beneath her feet.

“Why you little pests.....!!”

True Karis sensed danger and quickly tried to smash her scythe down but in that moment, the boy reached out with his hand then fired another shockwave. Trying to clear the ground brought pain from the air, and ignoring the air brought pain from the ground.

The boy stopped in midair and declared coldly.

“Neutron!”

Dynamos activated as giant collection of neutron particles started to form near True Karis' neck. True Karis tried to dodge however she could, but being larger also meant it was difficult for her to dodge attacks.

“Bomb!!”

Giant explosion occurred as large chunk of 'True Karis' neck got torn off. Blood from her neck trickled down and dyed her white skin red..... But astonishingly, 'True Karis' endured without dying.

"Y-you heckler, learn your place.....!!"

Was the firepower not enough? The boy became surprised and tried to attack again, but he already consumed enough mental energy from the attack before. In contrast, 'True Karis' was waving her arm with enormous force.

No matter how painful of a sting the bee had..... It was done for if human's palm hit it!

"Araaaaagh!!"

But 'True Karis' who almost struck the boy suddenly let out a loud scream then shivered. The El Search Party on the ground, the one amongst them, Eve, had summoned a Nasod Guardian to create a wide electric wave that swept across the ground.

'True Karis' core couldn't hold out anymore after getting hit directly by the electric wave.

"Y-you, hecklers....."

'True Karis' fell over as she said those words then didn't move again.

The enemy was defeated but the boy didn't feel too well. His plan of perfectly disposing the enemy by himself to earn those idiots' favor was ruined.

No one would suspect someone who helped them. Even more so if they were helped a lot.

"Tch....."

His plan didn't work out but he couldn't go back now. He had to follow up accordingly now that he revealed himself to these idiots. The boy collected his mind as he descended below. The El Search Party was easily cleaning up the remaining minions after 'True Karis' defeat.

And the back Eve, the girl who finished off 'True Karis', was wide open. Boy floated behind her back as he became conflicted for a moment.

Should he settle this right now? Attack first to take the girl down then snatch her away. It was a rather nice plan.

That's how enticing her defenseless back was..... But that will be a choice he couldn't turn back.

"I can't afford to fail after all....."

When he spoke to himself, the girl slowly looked around. Those golden eyes, this was the first time he saw them from this close. The boy unknowingly inhaled after their gazes met.

She was..... even more perfect Nasod than he imagined.

The calculations inside the boy's head got jumbled up so he instinctively tried to avoid her gaze. But as a result, he ended up meeting someone else's gaze.

A girl with white hair, red eyes and nine fox tails, leaning her spear on her shoulder was smiling voluptuously. She had a completely different air compared to the boy's observations of her from far away. Not only that, but her gaze felt strangely keen as if she could completely see through his thoughts.

"That fox....."

The boy felt uncomfortable so he turned his gaze forward again.

Nasod more beautiful than anything else in the world was staring straightly at him.

"Who are you?"

".....Is that all you're going to say to someone who helped you?"

The girl frowned lightly.

"How rude."

"I heard that plenty of times."

The girl's expression became even more offended when the boy responded with a low laugh. The boy started to feel eager so he folded his arms in a haughty manner.

He was someone who just helped these idiots out of danger. They owed him a favor.

"I'm going to help you guys. I'll become your comrade."

"....."

The girl didn't answer. Other Search Party members that finished the cleanup heard the boy's declaration and were paying attention.

But the boy felt very confident about his acceptance.

These idiots were overly soft. They'll end up accepting him. It was certain since he even proved his strength by defeating True Karis.

"Kukukuk....."

Alright, he even successfully infiltrated inside the El Search Party. All he needed to do now was to observe this Nasod while looking for a perfect chance to steal her core.

“Then let’s first.....”

Become friends.

“.....”

The boy froze in middle of his words at the thought that rose in his head. It was an absurd idea but he strangely couldn’t defy it. Friend? It was a word he never thought about in his life..... But it kept occupying his head when he looked at this girl.

He must become friends with her. It will be a very rigorous path but he could only achieve his goal by accomplishing this.

‘.....Because she’ll let her guard down in front of me if we become close?’

Although still somewhat doubtful, the boy thought of a reason he could accept. The boy spoke while smiling confidently after concluding the struggle inside his mind.

“So, will you become my f-f.....”

The words didn’t come out of his mouth for some reason. His face suddenly turned red as he felt as if something was caught inside his throat.

Just what kind of abnormally was happening to his body? His mind started spinning dizzily.

“Fr.....”

“.....”

And the girl’s direct gaze towards him felt bothersome.

The girl waited patiently for a while as the boy frantically struggled to force the words out of his mouth. Then she finally sighed lightly.

“Nice to meet you, Add.”

“.....Huh?”

He shouldn’t have revealed his name yet. But the girl also looked surprised by what she said because she blinked while touching her lips.

The boy who couldn't believe what he just heard
And the girl who couldn't believe what she just said

They exchange gazes.

They exchange hearts.



Story beyond the broken world
the fight to reach the end
begins now.

Code: 20131219

<Elsword_Time Trouble End>

To be Continued in Elsword Epic Story

Author's words

Elsword Time Trouble is finished with this volume.

Please enjoy Elsword Animation too when it airs.

-NZ

Illustrator's words

I drew various things while going back and forth between employee and freelancer.

Octoman is happy to be making a living off drawing.

I hope this book becomes a treasure for you.

-Octoman

Translator's words

Wow it's been a long journey! I remember back in late 2015 when I started translating this novel. Back then, I just started with translation of a small sample to see if I was cut out for the job. I never imagined I'd be translating entire 8 volumes over the course of one year at the time.

I must say, the translation process was difficult. Korean is a language very different from English both structurally and culturally. Translations of little snippets of cartoons or Elsword KR Patch Notes I've been doing before I began the novel translation turned out to be child's play in comparison. There were more cases that I could count where words had no clear counterparts in English so I had to go do research through the web to learn how it would be translated. But the most difficult hurdle if I had to pick one would be the sheer amount of text that needed to be translated. If this is how much effort one needs to put into translating some light novel about a backwater game, imagine how much study and dedication goes into translating full-fledged novels.

What kept me going was the joy that I can contribute to sharing this first ever decent Elsword media we got to the non-Korean readers. Sure, Elsword as a game might have fair bit of problems. But most would agree that at least its characters are very likable. (Well, minus one that doesn't belong). I don't know if this is same across all Elsword fans, but it has always been my dream to see a more in depth story about the El Search Party. Not just snippets of story dialogues we get in the game which is mostly NPCs telling us how awesome we are and that we need to do something, but an actual story where we can witness the El Search Party's thoughts and feelings during their epic journey.

Time Trouble was much better in that regard than any other Elsword media that came before. Elrios Chronicles was a disgrace and that long running comic book for kids was basically Elrios Chronicles but longer. El Type was probably the only thing that relieved the fanbase's thirst of wanting to see more story about the El Search Party. Unlike the medias that came before, Time Trouble keeps almost everything from the game intact while shuffling things around to become its own unique story. It also depicts our heroes' adventure in much more depth and in much more believable manner than in the game.

I honestly think Add's character was very well portrayed in this novel. We don't get to see the process of Add integrating into the El Search Party in the game. But I'm pretty sure it would have been similar to what happened in the novel. First starting out as a narrow-minded person who looks down at others and only cares about his goals, but then gradually becoming a reliable comrade who might have bit of a sharp tongue but actually cares a great deal about his companions. Many in the fanbase seem to misunderstand that Add is merely a monotone mad scientist character only wanting to steal Eve's core. That may have been true at the start, but Add develops into a far more dynamic character as time passes in both the game and novel.

Eve was depicted very accurately in this novel as well. Many in the fanbase (and even some official Elsword publishers) seem to think that since Eve is a robot so she doesn't have emotions. This misunderstanding is portrayed in how they voice acted Eve in International and Japanese servers. As Add said, Eve is the most human like Nasod ever. Cutest part about Eve is probably how she tries

so hard to deny that she doesn't have emotions but everyone else can see that she clearly does. This also makes moments when Eve allows herself to become emotional much more memorable. Without this characteristic, I imagine Eve will be a very boring character. All in all, Eve is a cool, smart and prideful girl who is not usually honest with her feelings. Her interaction with the other Search Party members was great as well. She wasn't close to anyone except Elsword at first, but she gradually became very close friends with everyone in the El Search Party.

Ara is same old Ara. Lovable, kind and polite girl who is a bit clumsy. But in the game, there was something strange about Ara's attitude. She always talked about wanting to save her brother but mentioned very little about the consequences of Ran's crimes. It almost seemed as if she wasn't bothered at all by all the tragedies Ran caused. In Sakra Devanam's win motion, she even pulls out Ran's portrait and rubs her face on it while smiling. This is an unthinkable act considering how kind of a person Ara is and how Ran not only killed everyone in Ara's village, but killed many more innocent people all across Elrios. This might be because of the game's limited way of portraying stories, but one cannot deny that this feels unnatural. In the light novel however, this part is portrayed in much more realistic way. Ara is entirely heartbroken by witnessing the tragedies that Ran has caused. She becomes caught up between the love for her brother and the sense of guilt and responsibility towards all of Ran's victims. This conflict in her heart almost breaks Ara, but the El Search Party helps Ara come to terms with her inner conflict. In the end, she chooses to punish her brother for his crimes, hopefully turning him back into a human then have him atone for his crimes, but killing him if it becomes necessary. This is a choice that Sakra Devanam path should be representing and Ara's angst and conflict to reach this conclusion feels much more realistic than in the game.

There was one part about Chung's in-game story that had been controversial amongst the fanbase. This is the part where Ara joins the El Search Party at the end of Hamel. No matter how understanding and compassionate Chung is, it felt very unnatural for him to come to terms with his hatred for Ran so easily in the game. Ran corrupted his father and caused so much suffering to Hamel, but Chung accepts Ara, who is Ran's sister, into the El Search Party seemingly instantly. This unnatural process of Chung accepting Ara is more fleshed out to be believable in the light novel. Chung is furious at Ara at first from only knowing the fact that she is Ran's sister, but he slowly begins to realize that his anger is misdirected and decides to fight side by side with Ara against his true enemy. The demons.

Rena's portrayal was exceptionally well done. She's a very sociable, playful and kind, big sister type of character. I especially liked how the playful side of Rena was highlighted in this novel. She seriously doesn't get enough spotlight in the game. She basically becomes invisible after Altera, where the original trio's adventure ends and more characters starts joining. I hope we see more of Rena in the game's story in the future. One another thing to note about Rena regarding the novel is how Night Watcher was portrayed. In the game, Night Watcher class flips Rena's personality 180 degrees with almost no explanation as to what caused such a drastic change. This change is so absurd that the well-known Korean Elsword cartoon artist, windy, who loves Rena very much,

denies that Night Watcher is Rena to this day (Add's line, "That's not Rena" in the novel is most likely a parody of this). The light novel makes this part believable by introducing additional settings. In the light novel, the Elf Village comes under attack by the demons and the Elf race is almost wiped out. Rena's shock from this event, her hatred towards the demons and her sense of responsibility towards the survivors of her race turns her into a very cold and icy person. This makes for a much believable scenario than Rena suddenly turning into a completely different person.

Raven wasn't in this novel too much and this was quite regretful. And the parts that he appeared might have seemed out of character for Raven to many people. Why would Raven succumb to D and join his side? Wasn't Raven this cool badass character that so many loved? It did seem strange to me at first too. But I could comprehend what side of Raven the author was trying to portray. Raven isn't that strong of a person than most people think. Yes, he is an extremely powerful combatant but the strength of his mind is completely different. He's very much a broken man, who has basically lost everything. But thanks to the El Search Party (and bit more because of Rena), he managed to patch himself back up and stand up once more to seek redemption for his crimes and contribute to good in the world. But considering the events that transpired in this novel, Raven's actions weren't too far-fetched. The very event that broke Raven before, the death of Seris, is repeated over and over again in front of his eyes. It's actually Rena who is dying and not Seris but the two of them look so much alike that Raven has difficulty separating the two in his mind. So, every one of Rena's deaths would have struck Raven with the grief of losing Rena, his important comrade, plus the grief of losing his beloved fiancé. Once you think this, it's actually surprising that Raven stayed sane through the nightmare that is the Time War considering there were more than 20 million repetitions of Rena's death. Although it's not described too well, Rena must have gone through a horrendous amount of suffering during the Time War. It's said that she decided to confront D directly, and she originally retained her memories of each loop. Rena's spirit must not have broken through the 20 million loops but she must certainly not have been in a very good state near the end. Raven finally couldn't bear to see Rena suffer anymore, so he made a deal with D to have Rena's memories of the previous loops erased and got a promise from D to not kill Rena. This was a choice Raven made with guilty conscience but he just couldn't take it anymore. But in the end, Rena soothes Raven's battered heart as she takes a brave step forwards towards unshackling Raven from his horrible past.

Elesis felt much more impactful as an enemy. Apparently, the original setting Elsword developers had in mind was to have Elesis appear as the El Search Party's enemy, very much like how it is in this light novel. It was great to see this possibility realized, and how much depth this change gave Elsword's character, who should be the main character of the series.

Even in this novel where Add is the main character, we are constantly reminded of how Elsword is the true main character. Like how everyone likes Elsword and trusts his decisions in crucial moments. I think Elsword became much more interesting character in this novel than in the game because Elesis became the enemy. Soon as he witnesses his sister as his enemy, he is forced to rethink his previous blind idolization and inferiority complex he has towards his sister. He does

suffer from the truth at first, but the El Search Party is there for him in his time of need, and this allows Elsword to make the decision of fighting against his sister. Instead of just following his sister's footsteps blindly, Elsword decides to fight for what he truly believes in, which is his comrades and the desire to be together with his sister.

Eun got a lot of highlight in here. There isn't too much information on Eun in the game or anywhere else so it was great to see so much of her here. I think she played a great role of a companion/mentor/guide for Add. Her goal was to get Add to cherish his comrades, but she never asked for this from Add directly. It was absolutely crucial for Add to come to this conclusion on his own terms. So Eun waited patiently until Add developed such feelings. Maybe Eun saw that Add was a caring person deep inside his heart and this was what made Eun believe in Add so strongly for all that time. Eun basically became the hidden heroine at the end of volume 7 and her sacrifice was one of my favorite scenes in the entire light novel series. Most of the readers would wish the characters they love a happy ending. I think Eun was more like the readers in this regard. She cared for the El Search Party very much as well. It must have been difficult for her to witness the El Search Party suffer so much over the course all the loops. Thus, she gave everything she had to guide the El Search Party towards the happy ending.

Aisha wasn't in this novel too much but it was great to see her in parts she came out. I especially liked how her loneliness without the El Search Party was portrayed. It was sad to see that she has given up all her personal desires like her love for Elsword and friendship with the El Search Party for the greater good.

There are many other characters that I could talk more about like Lu and Ciel, Perkisas, Ignia, Ran, Karis and Helputt but these last words section will get too long if I do that so I'll just leave a comment that I was glad to see them all somehow included in the light novel's story. I also want to say I'm very curious about the times that weren't shown in the story. There are so many possibilities. Honestly, I think this light novel would make great material for a visual novel type of game where you make choices in an attempt to lead the characters towards a happy ending. (Bad or alternate endings depending on player's choices)

Elsword isn't the best game ever. It has a very generic fantasy adventure formula and there are plenty of games with better and more elaborate stories out there. It's a strange game where players keep coming back to it despite there clearly being more impressive games out there. I think the main charm of Elsword is its charming characters. Players imagine how these charming characters would interact with the world of Elrios are very eager to know more about them. They are also eager to see more dialogues between the characters, whether it's during the heat of battle or some interesting events that happen in the characters' daily lives. In this perspective, I think Elsword Time Trouble did its job well in showing the characters and their relationship with each other in much more depth than in the game. It clears up some unnatural things about the characters from the game while creating a whole different perspective on the game's familiar story. I hope you readers enjoyed this light novel, it may not be the best light novel out there but I felt that it was a good Elsword story.

I hope that fans can come back to this light novel whenever they want to read more about the characters they love, and to experience all the emotions from this alternate Elsword adventure once again. Translating this Elsword novel was a very wonderful journey for me. Thank you for all your supports and most of all, reading my translations.

Goodbye, until another Elsword official media comes out and it needs translating.

-2nafish